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A DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIAL EXPERIENCE OF TOTAL FRENCH IMMERSION KINDERGARTEN: THE PERSPECTIVES OF CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS, AND THEIR TEACHERS.

BY

NADIA ROUSSEAU ©

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

SPECIAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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Nadia Rousseau

11601-96 Street
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T5G 1T8

18 avril 1995

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled A DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIAL EXPERIENCE OF TOTAL FRENCH IMMERSION KINDERGARTEN. THE PERSPECTIVES OF CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS. submitted by NADIA ROUSSEAU in partial fulfillement of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION.

.....

Dr. R.F. Mulcahy

.....

Dr. M.A. Bibby

.....

Dr. C. Tardif

DEDICATION

Je dois l'aboutissement de ce premier travail de recherche à mon mari et ami Francis, qui n'a cessé de croire en mes capacités, et ce, même dans une deuxième langue.

J'offre aussi cet ouvrage à Xavier et Samuel, qui m'ont gardé éveillée de nombreuse nuits, mais qui m'ont apporté et m'apporte toujours tout autant d'heures d'amour et de joie.

Ce mémoire, je le dois aussi à mes parents, Micheline et Romain, qui ont toujours été pour moi des modèles d'excellence. Ils m'ont donné la persévérance et le courage nécéssaire pour passer à travers les moments difficiles. Ils m'ont aussi donné le goût d'apprendre et de connaître.

ABSTRACT

This study is a descriptive investigation of the initial experience of total French immersion of eight kindergarten students as perceived by the children's parents, and teachers. The eight children participating in the study were interviewed on their feelings toward their schooling experiences as it relates to the use of French. The children's parents and teachers were also interviewed with respect to their perceptions of their children's feelings in the immersion classroom. Parents and teachers also kept a daily journal in which the children's behaviour were described for the one month duration of the study. The data was analyzed using qualitative procedures.

The study presents the eight participants' view of immersion as perceived by the students, their parents and teachers. The routine, the negotiation of meaning, and the children's sense of accomplishment are discussed from the teachers' point of view. Parents talk of the positive nature of the immersion experience, the children's use of French, and the use of 'sign language' in the classroom. Finally, the children's experience as it relates to listening, talking and understanding French is exposed. Commonalities and differences of perceptions are discussed.

An in-depth descriptive analysis was also conducted for two of the children. Four themes emerged from the data: teacher and child interaction; the importance of friendship and play in children's lives; children's feelings toward their schooling experiences; and, parental role and feelings toward French immersion kindergarten. In addition, a description of aspects of communication happening in an immersion classroom are presented. Parents' and teachers' perceptions of the initial immersion experience raises some questions regarding the level of questioning in the immersion classroom. It is suggested that immersion children develop questioning strategies that are different from regular English programme's students. The importance and role of the teacher's gestures in the immersion classroom are also reported. The two in-depth case studies present distinct experiences of immersion at the

kindergarten level. Characteristics of these experiences are presented. Suggestions for further research and recommendations to immersion teachers and parents are discussed.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Five year old children entering a French immersion (FI) programme not only have to adapt to school but also to a new language. This creates an initial period of language inadequacy during which the verbal language used by teachers has very little or no meaning.

There is a large body of research in FI, most of which deals with the level of academic achievement and cognitive abilities of these children (Lapkin & Swain,1990; Hammerly, 1989; Cummins & Swain, 1986). Even though research has confirmed a variety of affective factors related to success in second language learning (Krashen, 1982; Burt, Dulay & Finocchiaro, 1977), very little is known about the early immersion experience as perceived by children. It is only logical to suspect that a child experiencing emotional difficulties in early French immersion might not enjoy the immersion experience if not the complete school experience. That first experience might then have an impact on that child's whole schooling future. From my personal background, having experienced total immersion during adolescence, emotional difficulties such as anxiety and low self-trust in the new language are difficult emotions that can blacken the schooling experience. Hammerly (1989) also believes that early immersion may cause emotional difficulty for some children. The linguistic and social demands created in an immersion context are possible causes of anxiety, says Hammerly. Hammerly also claims that some immersion students report stories of great distress in the beginning of their immersion schooling. Parents of immersion children are also worried about the effect of the linguistic demands on their children's academic achievements and emotional states (Swain & Lapkin 1981). However, a more positive picture of the immersion experience of young children is reported by Weber and Tardif (1990; 1991a) after conducting an ethnographic investigation. These mixed views and parental concerns about the linguistic and emotional demands of the immersion experience raise the following questions:

How do children feel when questioned in French by their teachers? Do they understand what is being said, and do they feel they have the ability to respond to the teachers' specific demands? Are the children's parents and teachers sensitive to the children's feelings toward their initial school experience? In other words, what is the initial emotional experience of French immersion kindergarten students? These are important questions that deserve reflection and investigation in order to better comprehend the children's reality of immersion. This study is an attempt to explore the children's initial experience of kindergarten FI and their parents' and teachers' perceptions of the experience.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the initial emotional experience of French immersion kindergarten students as well as parents' and teachers' perceptions of the children's schooling experience.

Delimitation

This study included eight children who were enrolled in kindergarten in a total French immersion programme.

Limitations

1. Only children who did not use French at home participated in the study. The results could have been different if children using French outside school were included.
2. Only the children's mothers shared their perceptions of their children's schooling experiences. Therefore, the fathers' perceptions of the experience is unknown and could be either similar or different from the mothers' perceptions.
3. Because the data were collected early in the fall, the results could have been different if they had been collected later during the school year.
4. From the original ten children participating in the study, an in-depth data analysis was performed for only two of these children.The selection was based on the greater amount of data for these two children. Therefore, given the small number of participants, it would be erroneous to assume

generalizations among all children enrolled in a French immersion programme. However, the assumption for a descriptive study is that gaining insight into the participants' actual experience is crucial in order to better understand the phenomenon. The meanings given to the description of the experience is thought to be applicable to different persons' experiences. Even though two people's experiences will not be identical, commonalities in the experiences will exist.

5. A global view of immersion is also presented based on the data available from all the participants. Even though part of the data were incomplete--three parents did not keep a journal, three teachers had very few comments on their journals--there were commonalities between teachers' and parents' perceptions of the immersion. They are outlined in addition to what the children's say about their own experience.

Significance

As early French immersion is gaining popularity, it is to be expected that everyday life in a kindergarten classroom and its linguistic demands may give rise to some emotional difficulties for some children at the beginning of the school year. Given the small number of studies that have looked into that aspect of French immersion, it would be of great value to get some insight into children's perceived experience in French immersion kindergarten. This study may also shed some light on parents' perceptions of their children's initial schooling experience and on teachers' awareness of the students' initial reactions to total immersion as part of the schooling experience. Most important of all, this study may provide good insight into the initial reality of children experiencing French immersion in kindergarten. These insights might then be explored further in order to provide French immersion children with a better learning environment that takes into account their reality.

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter II presents a review of the literature relevant to the purpose of the study. Chapter III explains the design of the study. Chapter IV presents the participants' global view of the initial immersion experience. Two in-depth case studies are presented in chapter V. Finally, chapter VI presents an overview of the study as well as relevant implications for educators and parents.

CHAPTER II
RELATED LITERATURE
Academic and Linguistic Achievement

In French immersion programmes, the French language is used as the medium to teach other subjects to non French-speaking students. In early 1960, the first programme was tried in Toronto, soon followed in 1965 in St-Lambert, Quebec. The French immersion programme gained popularity all across Canada. In Alberta alone, over 25,000 students are presently enrolled in the programme (Dubé, 1993). Parents of students enrolled in French immersion generally want their children to be bilingual for employment opportunities but they are also motivated by the egalitarian ideal of unity in a bilingual Canada (Hammerly, 1989).

There is a large body of research on French immersion, most of which looks into level of academic achievement, first language development (L1), and second language development (L2). As Safty (1989) points out

> Over the past twenty years literature on French immersion has mainly focussed on linguistic development of French immersion students' first language (English); their linguistic achievements in the second language (French); their academic achievements in subject matters taught in French--generally mathematics and social studies - and occasionally on the socio-psychological impact of bilingual education on immersion students. (p. 549)

Parental concern about their children's academic achievement in their second language resulted in a great amount of research comparing academic achievement between students in a regular English programme and a French immersion programme. Most research reports that children enrolled in early total immersion programmes perform as well as their English-instructed peers (Cummins and Swain, 1986). After an exhaustive review of research dealing with L1 and L2 development, academic achievement in other

subjects, I.Q. and academic success, and social and psychological effects of immersion, Lapkin and Swain (1984) conclude that

> ...the research and evaluation studies associated with French immersion programs have demonstrated that students from a majority--language group can be taught in a second language with no long-term negative effects on first language development or on content learning, while at the same time becoming highly proficient in the target language. (p. 53)

Cummins and Swain (1986) explain that although immersion students are initially behind students in unilingual English programmes, within a year of the introduction of English Language Arts into the curriculum, French immersion students perform equally with students in the English programme in standardized tests of English achievement. The authors add that the result will be equivalent even if English Language Arts is not introduced before grade 3 or 4. Lapkin and Swain (1990) conclude

> The use of standardized tests of English achievement in hundreds of program evaluations conducted over the past twenty years has permitted researchers to dispel fears of the possible negative impact of French-medium instruction on the first language development of anglophone students. (p. 394)

Even more interesting, Lapkin and Swain (1990) report research indicating that an intensive initial exposure to French (early total immersion) has some positive effects on English skills. The authors specify that these positive effects have not been associated with a less intensive immersion programme.

As for the development of the second language (French), secondary school graduates approach native-like levels of performance in reading and listening comprehension but remain behind Francophone peers in their speaking and writing skills (Lapkin & Swain, 1990). These findings are consistently reported. In 1983, Swain et al. reported that by grade 6, immersion students had

attained near-native proficiency in listening and reading comprehension while their productive skills, speaking and writing, had remained non-native-like, although immersion students would have no difficulty in conveying what they want to say. In 1982, Swain and Lapkin reported similar findings.

An important variable influencing second language development was reported by Swain and Lapkin (1982)

> One further point should be made about the French language achievement of the early total immersion students. Two alternative settings for such programs have been studied: immersion centres, where only the immersion program is housed in a given school; and dual-track schools, in which the immersion and regular English programs co-exist (Lapkin *et al.*, 1981). It was found that the French language skills of the immersion students were enhanced by studying in immersion centres where a greater amount of French is used in the wider school environment beyond the classroom. (p. 42)

Another important factor in second language development involves the different types of immersion programmes. Lapkin and Swain (1990) report that early immersion students outperform late immersion students on selected speaking measures (e.g., fluency) and in listening comprehension. Lapkin, Hart and Swain (1991) state that: "Overall, early immersion students outperform middle immersion students in varying degrees in all four skill areas (listening, speaking, reading and writing)" (p. 31). In the same line of thinking, Cummins and Swain (1986) report that students from an early immersion programme performed significantly better than students enrolled in core FSL programmes (20-40 minutes of daily FSL instruction).

Even though there seems to be a consensus on the second language outcome of immersion, Hammerly (1989) speaks strongly on the writing and speaking skills of immersion students: "Although the students managed to communicate nearly all of their ideas, they [do] so in Frenglish, not French. Frenglish is not a language, nor a

dialect, but an embarrassment" (p.18). Hammerly (1989) believes Frenchglish, "...a very incorrect classroom pidgin--a hypbrid between limited French vocabulary and mostly English structure" (p. 20), is the result of the pressure put on the child to communicate in French even if grammatically and linguistically incorrect.

Social and Psychological Aspects

In 1987, Forsyth's study comparing self-concept, anxiety and security of children in gifted, French immersion and regular classes, showed the French immersion students to be less secure. The author recommends

> Teachers of children in French Immersion programmes might be able to help them, through discussion and example, to accept the fact that it is all right to make mistakes and discourage them from being defensive or rationalizing and blaming others. The children should be encouraged to take initiative but in a way that does not put pressure on them and minimizes fear of failure. (p. 156-157)

Hammerly (1989) discusses the emotional consequences of early immersion

> It stands to reason that removing children from the company of their neighborhood friends and placing them in a socially and linguistically alien environment where they are unable to communicate even at the most basic level is bound to cause some emotional difficulties. French immersion teachers, parents and graduates tell stories of children coming home crying every afternoon for months. Being expected to communicate in a language they have no mastery of naturally causes anxiety in many children. While some children find it emotionally difficult to start school even in their native language, the French immersion situation makes the emotional disruption much more serious. (p. 8-9)

Since young children usually will not choose what kind of school they will attend, Hammerly believes that as a result, children placed in French immersion programmes "find themselves lost, linguistically at first" (p. 37). Hammerly also criticizes the language interaction between the teacher and the student as a possible source of emotional difficulty

> Another emotional difficulty for young FI pupils is that there is no one in the school they can discuss personal problems with, for FI teachers insist on speaking only French. Some people deny that this is a hardship, since FI pupils are free to speak to their FI teachers in English. But such a claim fails to admit that a conversation in two languages is very artificial, and that children should not be forced to engage in such strange, stilted talk when they have something especially important to say. (p. 10)

Swain and Lapkin (1981) are among those who consider the linguistic demands not to be a source of additional stress for the children. They say

> Their concern [parents and educators] was fed by a mistaken belief that the children would be denied the possibility of spontaneously expressing their feelings and ideas because they would be allowed to speak only in French...True, the teachers speak only French, but they understand English, and for much of the first year the children talk to each other and their teachers in English. The children are certainly not inhibited from expression in their mother tongue. (p. 108)

In more recent years, Weber and Tardif (1990) investigated the children's experience of French immersion in kindergarten. They reported, "...how easily the children adapted to the situation--with very few tears, very little fuss, and with lots of smiles and enthusiasm despite an obvious initial shyness in some of the children" (p. 55).

Hammerly interviewed a FI graduate where the student expressed her memories of her first two years of French immersion: "There were lots of games being played...but I really didn't know what was going on. Actually, I was physically ill for the first two grades...Physically ill because I was so worried about--I was convinced that my parents had sent me to the wrong school..." (p. 148). She remembers FI being very difficult "because I had no friends from my own neighborhood to play [with] after school" (p. 148). She also remembers thinking she was being "chastized" by the teacher as a result of not understanding the instruction. However, looking back, she also remembers feeling proud of being in French immersion once she reached grade two. She concludes saying she is glad she took it.

Cummins and Swain (1986) recognize that "social and emotional crises" can accompany bilingualism. However, particularly for minority children, ensuring that the first language is well acquired before focusing on the acquisition of a second language can diminish these crises

> ...ensure that the child's home language is adequately developed before worrying about progress in the second language. It implies that the first language is so instrumental to the emotional and academic well-being of the child, that its development must be seen as a high, if not the highest, priority in the early years of schooling. (p. 101)

Cummins and Swain (1986) believe that the French immersion programmes allow acceptance and the use of the home language at school which is "one of the first steps in creating an environment where learning can occur, an environment which fosters feelings of self-worth and self-confidence" (p. 101). The authors state that in immersion programmes, the language in the corridors and the playground is English, the child's home language. Furthermore, even if the language of instruction is French, the children are allowed to communicate in English and the immersion teachers are bilingual. Therefore, the teachers understand whatever the children say to

them. "In this way, the teachers can respond relevantly, appropriately and supportively to their students, and build from the child's existing linguistic repertoires and interests" (p. 102).

In assessing L2 competency in immersion classrooms as part of an ethnographic study, Weber and Tardif (1991b) explain that in the immersion classrooms "the children were permitted to converse in English, but the teacher spoke to them almost exclusively in French" (p. 220).

Reviewing research that focused on social and psychological aspects of immersion education, Swain and Lapkin (1982) conclude

> First, the adjustment made by immersion children to their school experience was examined by looking at studies of the children's behaviour in class and their view about their school programme. The results suggest that early immersion students adjust readily to their school environment and report satisfaction with their programme and their way of studying French - more so than do late immersion students or students studying core French in short daily periods. (p. 79)

Swain and Lapkin (1981) also indicate that in general, early immersion students have a positive self-concept. The students favour increased contact with Francophones which is a positive attitude and a step to enhanced French-language skills.

Summary

As may be seen from the aforementioned literature, knowledge of the emotional experience of early French immersion is contradictory and complex. Educators need a better understanding about the child's view of his own experience in the beginning of the early immersion programme.

Generally, the literature has looked into the success of French immersion based on first and second language development and academic achievement. Far less attention has been devoted to the emotional aspects of early immersion. With the exception of those

few noted above, the experience of early immersion in kindergarten has received little attention despite the importance of the child's first schooling experience.

What are the young children's views of French immersion kindergarten? How do French immersion kindergarten children feel in their personal worlds, not always able to respond to the linguistic demands whether they are communicating in French or understanding teacher directives in French? This study attempts to explore the initial reality of children enrolled in French immersion kindergarten and to elucidate the children's, parents', and teachers' awareness of that reality.

CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The design of the study is the subject of this chapter. Divided into eight parts, the chapter will describe the pilot study, the bracketing, the questionnaire, the daily journal, the sample, data collection and coding, and data analysis.

Bracketing

I tend to believe that kindergarten children enrolled in total French immersion programmes experience difficulty which is reflected by an increase in anxiety levels as well as very little self-confidence in their new language and the demands it implies. I experienced total immersion in an English junior high school in the U.S. My first language being French, I had no one to turn to when confused or when I needed more explanations. I was very anxious and stressed. It took at least four months before I tried to talk in English because of a serious lack of self-confidence in that second language. Even though kindergarten children have the opportunity to speak English outside the classroom, I tend to believe they feel distress at the beginning of the year in their French classroom. Even today, at the Master's level, I still feel uncomfortable or frustrated sometimes when my first thought comes in French, and I just do not know how to accurately translate into English all the meaning and emphasis I wish to communicate.

I am well aware that French immersion programmes are different from total immersion in a different socio-cultural setting since the other students are all at the same level and the teachers know and take into account the new language deficit. A French immersion programme also differs in context since students have the opportunity to go back to their first language once outside the classroom. Finally, the age factor plays a role in the adaptation process. It is now well known that adolescence is a period of time when children want to be accepted by others and be similar to others. It is a period of conformity. Kindergarten students do not experience the need to conform at the same level that adolescents do even though they also have the need to be accepted by others.

As seen in the literature review section, the literature does not deal extensively with the emotional aspect of FI. Research reports are sometimes contradictory. The contradictory research findings and my own experience influence my research study in that I did not want to base my data on participant observation, being afraid that my own experience of immersion would bias my data. As reported by Weber and Tardif (1990, 1991a) the experience of FI can be positive for most children. However, as in Hammerly (1989), I still believe that some young children enrolled in FI programmes may experience a period of language inadequacy that in turn maybe related to some emotional difficulties.

In limiting the use of participant observation, I wanted to reduce the risk of unwillingly transforming the meaning of the data being collected. Given my bias toward the emotional experience of immersion, the experimenter effect was for me the main threat in insuring rigor in my data collection and data analysis. As explained by Borg and Gall (1989), the experimenter effect is "the degree to which the biases or the expectations of the observer have led to distortions of the data..." (p. 404). My experience of total immersion during adolescence brought me to believe that in some case, immersion situations can generate a great amount of anxiety and a low self-trust in the new language ability. I believe that poor self-trust in the new language may result in the refusal to speak the language or even to try to communicate in that language whether for school-related purposes or for social interaction. I believed that having the teacher and the parent doing the observation for me would prevent me from such bias, at the same time it would provide me with two perceptions of the same child's initial experience of FI kindergarten.

Interpreting the Data

In doing this research, my views of the initial experience of French immersion kindergarten changed. From subjective and pessimistic views expressed in the bracketing section, I developed a more objective view of the young child's schooling experience. Even though for some children, the early experience of immersion

kindergarten may be more challenging, a large number of children enjoy the experience.

In interpreting the data, one must keep in mind that the in-depth description of the immersion experience of Natalie and Marc does not imply that their initial experience of kindergarten would have been different had they been enrolled in a regular English programme. I have tried to explore and explain their early schooling experiences as expressed by the children, their parents and teacher, with possible factors influencing the experience drawn from the data I had available. Therefore, many unexpressed contributing factors could have had an impact on their experience. These unexpressed factors could include, for example, learning style, cognitive style, motivation or maturity.

The Pilot Study

An initial pilot study examining three children's reactions to FI in kindergarten as well as the perceptions of the experience of one of the children's mother and teacher was conducted in the third week of the beginning of the school year. The pilot study was first intended to verify the adequacy of the questionnaires to be used as part of the data collection procedures in the main study. Borg and Gall (1989) suggest that the researcher "Pilot-test the interview in order to improve questions, identify kinds of probes needed, and develop a sequence that makes sense and maintains interest" (p. 401) when planning on using interviews in qualitative research. The sample was selected according to Borg and Gall's recommendations to the researcher to "select a sample of individuals from a population similar to that from which you plan to draw your research subjects" (p. 435).

The teacher participating in the pilot study was contacted by phone by the researcher. The teacher then suggested three children in her classroom whom she felt would be good candidates. The children the teacher judged to be the most talkative were selected based upon their abilities to talk and express themselves. The three children's parents were contacted by phone, and they agreed to their children being interviewed by the researcher. One of the three parents agreed to be interviewed as well. The aim of the research

project was explained to the parents and teacher, and they were given explanations on the importance of the pilot study and its importance to the development of a questionnaire.The parents were also told how the interviews with the children would be conducted. The parent and teacher were asked their opinions concerning what type of questions they felt would be appropriate in order to discuss the children's experiences of immersion. As mentioned by Borg and Gall (1989), another interviewing rule for qualitative research is to ensure the questions are posed "in a language that is clear and meaningful to the subject" (p. 401).

It was felt that a pilot study was necessary to insure the appropriateness of the children's questionnaire and to insure that the questionnaire format would reveal as much data as possible for qualitative analysis. Given the nature of the question, the researcher felt that a qualitative investigation was most appropriate. In this research paradigm, "the researcher is bent on understanding, in considerable detail, how people such as teachers, principals, and students think and how they came to develop the perspectives they hold" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 2). In this case, the researcher wanted to gain an understanding of how children in FI kindergarten perceive their experience and how the parents and teacher perceive the children's experiences.

Even though the parent and teacher were encouraged to comment on the questionnaire, they did not have any criticisms to make concerning the format. However, one parent felt it was difficult to describe her child's experience of kindergarten immersion so early in the year. Both parent and teacher expressed interest in the study. As for the children, they agreed to respond to the questionnaire without any fuss. The three pupils did not show any difficulty in answering the questions using the three figures (happy to sad face).

The next section will present the questionnaire that was used with both parent and teacher and the one used with the children in the main study.

The Questionnaire

A first questionnaire was developed for the children. Because little research has been done on young children's experiences in French immersion and because the major goal of the research project was to get some insight on the child's perception of his experience, it was felt that a questionnaire using a qualitative data collection approach would be most appropriate. Given the young age of the children and the difficulty with truly expressing and discussing their feelings, a happy face, a neither sad nor happy face, and a sad face were used as a means to communicate their feelings. The children only had to point to the figure that best represented how they felt. The children were also encouraged to verbally communicate with the interviewer (researcher) throughout the interview. To ensure the children's comprehension of the meaning of the three figures, they were told prior to the interview the significance of each of the figures, and they were then asked, before the actual interview began, the meaning of each figure. The interviewer also asked the meaning of the figure chosen at any given question in order to verify comprehension throughout the interview. Children's interviews were conducted in English.

Since I also wanted the parents' and teachers' perceptions of the child's immersion experience, it was felt that the questions asked of all participants should be equivalent or similar. In order to achieve that, a structured interview schedule was designed. The questionnaire to be answered by the children posed the same questions as the parents' but phrased them differently since the language level between children and adults is different.

The questionnaire was developed based on the four learning qualities reported by Sobol and Sobol (1987) in regard to children's feelings and emotions. Inspired by Piaget's theory of development, Sobol and Sobol explain four distinct learning qualities displayed by kindergarten children:

1) curiosity: they are eager to explore everything in their physical environment, open to new experiences, intrigued by

words and letters and numbers...They want to use their senses, their hands, their minds.

2) activeness: kindergarten children want to talk, listen, play, touch, taste, question.

3) eagerness: they wish to please parents and teachers. Never again will children be so ready to respond to adult wishes.

4) concern with the here and now: kindergarten children want to experience everything in all settings. For them, what they do in school is neither about the past nor about the future. It is about their personal world, just as it is right now (9-10).

Based on these qualities, the children's questionnaire included questions addressing the child's:

1. - curiosity (open to new experience, intrigued by words and numbers...) How does it feel to learn new songs in French?
2. - activeness (talk, listen, play, question...)
   How does it make you feel when you talk in French?
3. - eagerness (to please parents and teachers)
   How do you feel when the teacher speaks to you in French but you don't understand?
4. - concern with the here and now
   How do you feel when you are in the classroom?

The complete children's questionnaire has been included in Appendix A.

As for the parents and teachers (see Appendix B), they were asked questions about how they perceive the children's emotional experiences in regard to the same four learning qualities proposed by Sobol and Sobol. For example:

1. - curiosity (open to new experience, intrigued by words and numbers...) How do you think "X" feels learning new concepts in French? What makes you think that way?
2. - activeness (talk, listen, play, question...) Do you think "X" talks in French in class? If so, how do you think it makes him/her feel? If not, why do you believe he/she does not?

3. - eagerness (to please parents and teachers) Do you think "X" is able to respond to the teacher's demands in order to please him/her? What makes you think that way?
4. - concern with the here and now
How do you think "X" feels going to a French immersion kindergarten? What makes you think he/she feels that way?

Daily Journal

In order to obtain a more complete picture of the initial experience of French immersion kindergarten and to maximize the data validity and to allow for triangulation of data, observation notes were provided by the parents and teachers. As previously mentioned, it was also felt that using the parents' and teachers' observations of the participating children would prevent potential unintentional bias if the observation had been performed by myself. In addition, it was also felt that having the teacher's and the parent observations of the same child would provide a more complete and accurate picture of that child's experience of FI in kindergarten as it is seen in the school and home. As a situational analysis within a case study, a particular event, (starting FI kindergarten) "is studied from the points of view of all the participants" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 65). When all the participants' views, "are pulled together, they provide a depth of perception that can contribute significantly to understanding the event being studied" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 403).

Therefore, the parents participating in the study were asked to provide observational information about their children starting at the beginning of the study (mid-October) through to the end of the study (mid-November). The observational information gathered was any verbal and/or motor behaviours that were pleasant or unpleasant to the child. In order to provide this information, the parents were asked to keep journals, for a one month period, in which they wrote their daily observations. The parents could also note any changes in their children which they judged significant since beginning kindergarten.

The children's teachers were also asked to keep daily journals for the same length of time as the parents. The teachers wrote their

daily observations of the participating children in their classroom. The observational notes taken by the teachers were any significant behaviours presented by the students participating in the study when at school.

The time during which the study took place, early in the children's immersion experiences (mid-October to mid-November), did affect the data collected. For example, a child enrolled in FI kindergarten will have less experience of French and less knowledge of French vocabulary at the beginning of the school year than at the end of the year. The researcher's interest in the emotional experience of French immersion will therefore be looked at as the initial immersion experience of kindergarten children. As mentioned by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "the time you visit a place or person often will affect the nature of the data you collect. Schools are different at the start of the year than at the end" (p. 67).

The Sample

The sample for this study consisted of ten children from two different school districts in Edmonton and surrounding areas. The two schools participating were selected from the total French immersion schools in the Edmonton area. All kindergarten French immersion students within the two selected schools were considered as possible participants. The criteria for choosing the participating kindergarten classes within these two schools was based upon the teachers' willingness to participate in the study, since they were expected to devote time and effort to the data collection procedure for a one month period. The four kindergarten teachers from one of the schools and the two kindergarten teachers from the other school all agreed to be part of the study.

The teachers were then asked to select one kindergarten class in which they felt it would be possible for them to observe the participating children. Once the teachers had selected their participating classes, the possible participants were selected based upon three criteria. The participants: (a) were not to use French at home with any of their family members, (b) were not to have attended a French pre-school, and (c) were to be perceived by their teachers as talkative children.

All possible participants were then given letters to take home to their parents in which the purpose of the study was explained as well as a consent form given to allow the children to be part of the study and to confirm that as parents they, too, agreed to participate (see Appendix C-D). Of the 49 consent forms sent, 14 signed consent forms were returned. When more than two children from the same class had returned their signed consent forms, two participants were selected. It was felt that more than two students to observe by one teacher would not allow for careful and thoughtful observation.

As shown in Table 1, of the 10 children participating in school A and B at the beginning of the study, two withdrew during the first week of the study and three parents quit keeping daily observations of their children before the end of the study. One parent withdrew because of the great amount of time needed to keep the daily journal, and the second parent withdrew because writing in English caused a problem since it was a second language. Of the remaining five participants for whom all forms of data were available, two children were selected for the actual in-depth analysis. These two children (S.1 and S.2) were selected for the great amount of data available from both parents and teachers in the form of interviews and journals.

However, as illustrated in Table 2, one child's interview (Natalie) could not be used. At no time during that specific interview did I feel that the child was responding with attention and truthfulness. For example, in choosing the figures that best represents how the child felt under a specific circumstance, the child would do "mini mini mani mo" to select the answer. I did not feel these answers truly reflected that child's feelings towards any given activity. Nevertheless, the parent's and teacher's information on that child were so complete that they were considered as "key informants." It was therefore decided that that child would still be selected for the analysis.

Table 1

Participants Following Through During Complete Data Collection Period.

Participants	Information Collected Journals	Interviews
School A		
T.1	X	X
S.1	-	X
P.1	X	X
S.2	-	X
P.2	X	X
T.2	-	-
S.3	-	-
P.3	-	-
S.4	-	-
T.3	X	X
S.5	-	X
P.5	X	X
T.4	X	X
S.6	-	X
P.6	X	X
School B		
T.5	X	X
S.7	-	X
P.7	X	X
S.8	-	X
P.8	X	X
T.6	X	X
S.9	-	X
P.9	-	X
S.10	-	X
P.10	-	X

Note: S=Student; P=Parent; T=Teacher
T.2, S.3 and P.3, S.4 and P.4 withdrew during the first week of the study.

Table 2
Forms of Data Provided by the Two Participating Children, Their Parents and Teacher.

Participants	Interview	Journal
Marc (S.1)	X	
Natalie (S.2)		X
Marie (T.1)	X	X
Marc's mother	X	X
Natalie's mother	X	X

Note: S=Student; T=Teacher

As explained by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "some subjects are more willing to talk, have a greater experience in the setting, or are especially insightful about what goes on. These people become *key informants*" (p. 67).

I did not look at the family structure. Therefore, the children's parents might have consisted of two parents married or unmarried, a single parent, a guardian or any other form of parental structure. At the time the data were collected, I did not feel that the family structure was relevant to the purpose of this study. However, it is interesting to note here that in all cases, only the mother participated in the interview and in the writing of the daily journal. Therefore, the parents' perceptions of the children's experiences of French immersion only consist of the mothers' perceptions. It would be erroneous to generalize the mothers' perceptions to the fathers'.

Data Collection

Parent Interviews

As noted on the information sheet and on the consent form (see Appendix C-D), an average thirty minute interview was conducted with the participants' mothers in mid-November. The parental interviews took place in the participants' homes except for one parent who was met at school. Prior to the interviews, all parents were contacted by phone and asked whether they would prefer to

meet the researcher in their homes or in their children's schools. The appointments were made one week in advance.

Parent Journals

In addition, five of the ten parents kept daily journals of their children's behaviours throughout the study. Two parents withdrew during the first week of the study and three others did not complete the journal but were interviewed nevertheless. The participating teacher and I were not notified until the end of the study of these withdrawals. As a result, the concerned teacher had kept a daily journal for two of her students for the one month period even though they had withdrawn from the project. When I found out, the interview scheduled with that particular teacher was cancelled. The teacher felt betrayed and unhappy about that matter. However, she realized that the children and their parents had the right to withdraw at any time during the study. As for myself, I contacted the two parents who withdrew to assure them that it was alright to withdraw and to inquire about the reasons for withdrawing. For one of the parents, she felt they did not have the time to keep track of their child's daily behaviour. As for the other parent, writing in English caused a problem since the home language was Polish and she was not yet fluent in English.

Teachers Journals and Interviews

The five remaining teachers participating in the study were interviewed in their schools during the third week of November. The interview length was about forty minutes. All teachers had kept daily journals for the full length of the study.

Children Interviews

The children's ten minute interviews took place in the children's schools. All children willingly agreed to participate in the interviews. They all had been previously told by their parents and teachers that "a lady would want to talk with them." Interestingly enough, all participating children from school A used only the three figures to respond to the questionnaire with very few verbal comments. As for the other school, none of the children used the figures since they all preferred to converse with the researcher while answering the questions. In both cases, the teachers were not

surprised by their pupils' ways of answering the questionnaire. The teachers from school A told the researcher that their pupils were a little shy. As for the teachers from school B, they were amused by the way their pupils communicated with the researcher commenting on how talkative these children were. Even though the teachers from both schools were asked to comment on the way the children interacted with the researcher (verbal vs. non-verbal), the content of the children's interviews was not revealed to the teachers to protect the children's privacy. All interviews had been audio-taped I also kept a record of my own feelings and reactions during the interviews and of observations while in the schools.These notes will be referred to as fieldnotes.

Data Coding

All audiotaped interviews both for selected children as well as for their parents and teachers were transcribed using a micro-computer. The parents' and teachers' daily journals were also transcribed entirely. Parts of transcripts of all participants have been included in the Appendix section (see Appendix E-F-G). My fieldnotes were also transcribed.

After the transcription of all forms of data, the children, parents, and the children's teacher were contacted by phone in order to discuss the anonymity issue. The children's teacher suggested being referred to as Marie. The two children are referred to as Marc and Natalie. As for the children's mothers, they are referred to as Marc's mother and Natalie's mother.

Using qualitative analysis software, all transcribed interviews and journals were coded. The researcher's fieldnotes were added to the corresponding interview at the beginning of the transcript.

Once the coding task was completed, all codes were sorted so that for each interview and journal, all meaning units under given codes would be regrouped together. Categories were then formed regrouping a number of coded meaning units that were related to each other. Finally, themes were identified from the categories for all sources of data. For example, the theme "friendship and play at

the center of the child's kindergarten experience" regrouped the categories illustrated in Table 3.

Appendix H also presents a sample of the tags and their meaning units belonging to the category "friends" as expressed in the teacher journal.

Table 3
Theme Formation of "Friendship and Play at the Center of the Child's Kindergarten Experience"

	Categories		
Sources	Friends	Class activities	Play
T.journal	X	X	X
T.interview	X	X	X
Marc's mother's journal	X	X	
Marc's mother's interview	X	X	X
Marc's interview			X
Natalie's mother's journal	X	X	X
Natalie's mother's interview	X	X	X

Note: T=Teacher

Data Analysis

Given the intuitive insights associated with qualitative data analysis (Borg & Gall,1989; Bogdan & Bilken, 1992), the researcher felt that having the participants involved in the interpretation of the data would be appropriate and add rigor to the data analysis process

> Because the qualitative researcher usually attempts to reconstruct reality from the frame of reference of the subjects, it follows logically that the respondents may in some cases be better able than the investigator to understand the complex interactions that have been observed and account

for the influence of local values on these interactions. (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 386)

In order to prevent bias in the data interpretation, Marie, the two children's teacher, was contacted by phone by the researcher in order to discuss part of the data interpretation, mainly the interview data. For one thing, Marie was grateful for that attention and readily accepted going through part of the data and discussing the interpretation. Only summary sections of the interview were reviewed with her. In verifying the researcher's interpretation of an event with the informants, Riley (1992) recommends only to discuss the summary of findings since "many informants may be daunted by being offered a long document to read, or embarrassed to see all the incoherencies of their own speech on a transcript" (p. 126). Therefore, a summary of the teacher distinction between Marc and Natalie was discussed. Marie was in agreement with my interpretation of her statements.

Given the young age of the children and the fact that they mostly responded using the three happy to sad faces, it was felt that contacting them regarding what they had told the researcher would not be relevant. Furthermore, their perceptions of the immersion experience as expressed at the beginning of the school year would probably have changed by the time the analysis was undertaken. As for the parents, Marc's mother was surprised the researcher had called her regarding the anonymity issue. She was happy with what she had shared and trusted the researcher's interpretation. Furthermore, she, too, wanted to be objective while the data were collected. She wrote in her journal: "I'm sure every parent is writing how wonderful their child is, and I laugh to myself as I re-read over the last few entries. Of course I think Marc is wonderful, but I'm trying to write objectively--really"!

Natalie's mother was not contacted regarding verification of my interpretation of her child's experience of immersion. I felt that my interpretation being approved by both the teacher and Marc's mother was sufficient to ensure rigor in the data interpretation. To check interpretation of data with the participants is a good way to

ensure rigor and trustworthiness (Riley, 1992). However, it is not necessary to do so with all of the informants in order to obtain evidence for the interpretation. According to Riley (1992), the use of multiple sources, using quotations and relating the findings with the studies are other ways to support the researcher's findings. However, as explained by Riley (1990), it is important to recognize the researcher's own ideas about the data being interpreted

> It is important to understand the inherent limitations on interpretations of qualitative data. There are two key points. The first is that you can only offer a personal interpretation and other interpretations will always be possible. Meaning is personal and events have different meanings for those present, for you and for your clients. Meanings can also change with time.
>
> The second key point is that you have made a limited case study and you cannot be sure how far your interpretation applies outside that case study. (p.69)

Both Natalie's and Marc's data analyses looked at common themes from the teacher's, the parents', and the children's points of view. However, Natalie's and Marc's experiences of French immersion kindergarten are nothing alike. For this reason, perception differences in an underlying theme between the two children were reported and documented with the children's, the parents', and the teacher's own words.

Before presenting the descriptive analysis of Natalie's and Marc's experience, a general view of the children's experience is outlined from the data collected from all eight participants.

CHAPTER IV
GLOBAL VIEW OF THE MAJOR STAKEHOLDER OF THE INITIAL IMMERSION EXPERIENCE

This chapter is divided into three sections, presenting a global view of the initial immersion experience as perceived by all 8 children, their parents, and teachers. For 6 of the 8 children, it was not possible to proceed to an in-depth case analysis because of the incomplete nature of the data. Therefore, the data available from the parents consisted of 5 journals and 8 interviews. Five teachers participated in an interview and kept a daily journal. Only one of the 8 children's interview was not used. In order to get some sense of these participants' perception of the initial immersion experience, all form of data for parents were regrouped and analyzed. The same method was used for the teachers and children.

Section 1: Teachers' Perception of the Initial Immersion Experience

This first section presents the five teachers' common perception of French immersion kindergarten as expressed in the journals and interviews. Divided in three parts, teachers talk about the importance of the routine in the immersion classroom, the children's sense of accomplishment, and the negotiation of meaning in the classroom.

Routine

According to all five teachers, the routine in the immersion classroom is vital to the smooth operation of the class and for the children's sense of security. One should think of the routine as all structures and boundaries brought in place by the teacher in order to sequence the activities in the classroom. These structures also include rituals. As Anna explained in her interview: "when we first started [the journal] in October, October is still so soon, the first week or two is so much routine, that you learn a couple of songs, basic vocabulary, basic colors...[The children] feel uncomfortable at first."

Explaining about a more difficult start for two children in his classroom, Benoît tells how the routine was of particular help to one of these two children

> l'enfant voulait partir, il pleurait, il faisait des crises...puis un moment donné tout le monde s'est calmé. Le petit garçon est encore en classe puis il n'a plus de problème du tout...Je pense que pour certains enfants c'est un gros changement. Il a appris la routine, il s'est senti en sécurité puis il s'est calmé. Il s'est mis à avoir du fun comme les autres. Dans le fond, ce dont l'enfant à besoin à la maternelle c'est sa sécurité. Il a besoin de la routine qui le sécurise. Une fois que l'enfant connait sa routine, l'enfant se sent confortable.

The order in which the activities take place in the classroom are repeated day after day until the children know the sequence of each daily and weekly activity. "There is circle time and then there is play time and work at tables," says Karen. "At the beginning of the day it all starts in French because they know the routine: the calendars, picking centres, nous allons chanter, vos lettres, etc.," reports Anna. The vocabulary used to inform the children of a change of activities is always the same.
"Ils sont habitués maintenant 'Tu découpes sur la ligne (en chantant).' Ils le disent en même temps que moi ou même avant moi! 'Dans la poubelle (en chantant).' Alors je répète tout le temps ça," says Benoît.

The routine seems to be an element of security for the children and a small change to the daily routine may cause some concern. On a short day of school, Linda described in her journal one of her student's behaviour: " 'Where are we going'? 'Why'? [The student] bougeait beaucoup pendant la célébration. Il chuchotait avec ses amis. I didn't have snack! [He] seemed very concerned [that he has had] no snack." Gesell and Ilg (1987) confirm the five year old's need for a well established routine in kindergarten so that the child feels secure: "L'enfant de 5 ans aime une vie routinière et s'adapte bien à un programme d'activités qui lui permet une liberté de mouvements tout en maintenant un contrôle dans la succession des diverses activitiés" (p. 74).

As will be shown in the next part of this section, the routine also has a role to play in the children's negotiation of meaning.

Negotiation of Meaning

In his interview, Benoît was particularly insightful on how the children succeed in understanding and making sense of what is being said in French in the classroom. All the strategies used by the children to make sense of the new language in different context is referred to as negotiation of meaning. He compares the kindergarten children in immersion with hard of hearing children

> Je pense que les enfants en immersion ressemblent à des malentendants, parceque c'est ca qu'ils sont finalement. La routine nous donne la compréhension pour savoir de quoi on parle. Ils sont très visuels en immersion. Pour savoir, tu sais par exemple quelqu'un qui a des problèmes d'audition, ils doivent regarder les mouvements, la face pour comprendre.

According to Benoît, it is in these conditions that immersion children develop communication strategies that children from regular programme may not have developed. Listening strategies, questioning strategies, are some of these strategies, says Benoît

> Je trouve qu'ils développent des stratégies de communication que souvent les anglophones n'ont pas développées. Regarder, ou savoir exactement ce qui se passe. En immersion, ils vont développer des stratégies d'écoute, ils voient tout! Ils prennent toutes les stratégies possible pour comprendre ce que tu dis puisqu'il peut y avoir du vocabulaire qu'ils ne comprennent pas. Juste l'expression de la voix...alors, souvent, c'est mon intonation (qui les fais sourire!), 'non non non non', il s'est passé quelque chose, tout le monde regarde. Je pense qu'à un moment donné, je me demande si ils n'apprennent pas à poser des questions pour avoir des réponses pour pouvoir comprendre, des réponses simples. Lorsque les réponses sont trop compliquées, ils ne comprennent pas. Souvent, 'what'!, ils vont exprimer qu'ils n'ont pas compris. Je me demande si à un

> moment donné ils ne développent pas une stratégie pour poser des questions où tu a des oui et des non. Est-ce que c'est ça ou ça. Comme ça ils ont une réponse simple. Ils vont te poser une question et la réponse est dedans.

As Fillmore (1982) explains, in a second language learning school context, it is important that teachers use a lot of gestures along with the speech so that "learners...if they are at all observant-can figure out what is being said, even if they know little of the language being spoken" (p.182, p. 283). After observing FI kindergarten, Weber and Tardif (1991a) reach the same conclusion. They state that

> meaning in the classroom did not seem to reside in words as much as in context and in the paralanguage elements of communication...to incorporate the kinesic (gestual), and the proxemic (spatial) in addition to the paraverbal. (p.105)

Anna, Karen, Marie, and Linda also think that the negotiation of meaning is often accomplished as a game. For example, Anna said in her interview: "It is more a game where they try to figure out what I am saying." Linda also says that in general children "seem to enjoy playing with the language and the words." Marie also says the children are playing at "guessing." It also appears that children in the classroom are very helpful with each other. Once someone has figured out what has been said, she/he will often tell the others. As Anna puts it, "friends help each other."

Most teachers also feel they can identify the children that understand from the ones that do not. For example, a child will "look down a little bit and when she understands, her eyes light up and she goes 'ooooh'," says Anna. When uncertain, one of Karen's students "wants a lot of direction," she wrote in her journal. As for Benoît's students, when they lack understanding, one puts her hair in her mouth with a kind of a shy smile, and others will just ask in English what it is that they did not understand. Benoît strongly believes that children for whom the immersion context represents too much

of a demand are easily identified because they themselves clearly express it and their parents are usually aware of it

> Moi je considère que ceux qui n'ont pas d'affaire en immersion c'est ceux qui vont clairement l'exprimer, il faut savoir qu'est-ce qu'ils expriment. Dès le début, les parents viennent te voir et te dise 'ah non, ah non, mon enfant me dit...,' mais c'est assez rare. Les enfants qui n'aiment pas [l'immersion], ils vont refuser de parler, puis les parents s'en rendent compte. On s'en rend compte assez vite.

On a happier note, during the interviews, all teachers clearly express the more special sense of accomplishment children in immersion have. This aspect of their discourse is presented in the last part of this first section on teachers' perceptions of the children's immersion experience.

Children's Sense of Accomplishment

The children's feeling of accomplishment appears to be a shared perception of teachers. All teachers talk of their students as being proud of themselves. They are proud to be in an immersion classroom and happy to be there. They are proud to sing in French and mostly to remember the French words of the song. They are also proud to count in French and to be the first one to guess the meaning of a specific word or directive. Karen has the impression that the immersion programme is "a lot more fun and challenging" than the English programme. She wrote in her journal of a student feeling proud after using a French word while playing: "Suddenly as he picked up a hat piece he said, 'look Bob, a "chapeau."' He seemed pleased with himself." According to Anna, to be in immersion is something special a child has and "a child is lucky because it is not all the kids that do that." However, Anna also believes that the child's feelings toward the immersion programme might be influenced by that child's family and teacher: "I suppose it would depend on how the parents are and how the teacher is."

It is in the second section of this chapter that the parent's perception of their children's immersion experience will be discussed. And as it will be seen, parents and teachers do have many common perceptions on the nature of their children's experience.

Section 2: Parents' Perceptions of the Initial Immersion Experience

The 8 parents perceptions of their children's initial immersion experience will be presented under three topics: (a) positive experience, (b) routine and use of French, and (c) signed language. First it is important to specify that for this section of the analysis, only five parents had kept a daily journal. However, all eight parents participated in an interview.

Positive Experience

Whether or not their child understands everything that is being said in class, all parents believe their child's experience to be a positive one. As one parent puts it, her child's kindergarten experience is "very very positive and as long as it's positive for her then it's positive for me...most of the time are enjoyable experiences...she seems to be having a good time." Another mother says immersion kindergarten "is rewarding" to her child. She says "it's exciting that she is learning something different there than what she's learning at home. I think it's rewarding rather than being too much of a challenge." Another mother wrote in her journal that her daughter was "proud of what she learned, not that she learned it in French or English! Her focus is on the learning, not the language."

This last statement also appears to be shared by many parents. In all interviews, the mothers were sure that their child was happy in the classroom. In addition, most of them thought that the language used in the kindergarten had no real influence on that experience. "She is not going to French immersion, she's just going to kindergarten. She happens to be lucky to be learning French at the same time, so she's eager to go each day and she's having fun with her friends," says a child's mother. In the same line of thinking, another mother adds "she enjoys the learning aspect of it whether it be in English [or French]."

As with the teachers, most parents think of the French learning aspect of immersion as a game. "It is more a game to learn the words and she isn't aware of it then," says another parent. "She likes the music, she's always liked music so she enjoys all the singing and new songs" to add another child's mother. That same mother wrote in her journal how her child was not discouraged by not knowing the meaning of all words of a song: "[She] sang 'le clown Samuel' many times. [I] asked her what the different lines of the song meant- [she] knows what the song means in general but doesn't know certain phrases--but also doesn't care that she doesn't understand a particular line, just likes to sing it"!

Weber and Tardif (1991b) confirms that mother's last statement. In assessing children's second language competency in an immersion context as part of an ethnographic study, the authors explain that for many children, "their sense-making latched on to single words as semantic messengers for a whole sentence" (p. 227). In this study, the children did not know the exact translated meaning of each French word of a given sentence, but they could give sense to a French sentence using a key word associated with cues and symbols.

As will be shown in the following part of this section, the use of French at school as part of the routine is also seen at home as part of a game.

Routine and the Use of French

Again, parents and teachers have similar beliefs in regard to the importance of the routine in the child's adaptation and feeling of security in the classroom. A mother says it is once the routine is implanted that the children get "excited." She emphasizes that in the first few weeks of school, "what they [children] are basically trained for at that early age is the routine." Another mother says once the routine is implanted, the child's "little apprehension" is fading away.

The playing aspect of kindergarten, the routine in which most activities take place and the use of French in these activities appears to transfer to home activities. A common theme among most parents' discourse has to do with talking French in a made up

language. In all of the five journals and in most interviews, parents report activity play where they have "caught" their child playing in French using a made up language. The children would pretend to speak French "so there would be words and would be accents, kind of fun, and that's exactly what they're doing, they're making up words and pretending to speak French," says one of the mother's. Another mother reports her daughter play

> she will be talking and playing in a made up language that sounds French. The words and the accents sounds French but it's not a true language but she'll be playing with her dolls or with whatever sort of game she's playing and she'll use this non existent language.

For one of the students who has an older brother in immersion, this play will be interrupted by vocabulary correction made by the older brother

> They don't speak in French to each other but they will, they'll sing French songs and they'll talk about different words...Bob [brother] will say that's not the right way to say it...so he would correct her and she would argue and say this is the way he says it.

Finally, the use of French is also part of the home daily life where the child will ask her/his parent questions regarding the meaning of a word or where she/he will share the new words or song just learned. According to a parent: "it does help to have a little bit of French to be able to help." Another mother explains that her and her child "are more or less fooling around with the language because [we]'re saying please and thank you and whatever and she's saying how do you say this and some of the words I will say I don't know, and other ones I will know." For another mother, "the more French words my son knows, the more he says them--especially when I practice, he likes to teach me."

As can be seen, even though parents do not appear to think their child is really conscious she/he is learning French, the French language takes a greater part of their daily activities at home at a similar rhythm that they learn more and more French words and songs at school. Back in the schools, gestures seem to be an important aspect of the method used by the teacher to teach French material to the students. As will be seen in the following section, as the teachers, this special aspect of the immersion classroom is also acknowledged by the children's parents.

Signed Language

The term signed language does not refer to the American Sign Language used by the deaf population but to visual strategies used by teacher and student to make sense of the French language. It is through the use of gestures, tone of voice, and facial expression among other things that French immersion teachers express the meaning of the French words to the student said Benoît in the previous section on teacher's perception. According to Benoît, French immersion students develop some listening strategies that enable them to makes sense of what is going on in the classroom the same way hard of hearing children would do. This view of the negotiation of meaning between the teacher and the student is also shared by most parents. Talking about her daughter's teacher using English or French to explain important matter to the children a mother said in her interview

> I know he speaks English to them if he needs to explain something about safety or someone is hurt or that kind of thing but otherwise having been there almost everything that he does is in French and he may use an English phrase here or there if he can't explain it in signed language.

The same mother explains that to make sense of the things being said in French, her daughter "is watching his hand motions and that sort of thing." Another mother with "some basic knowledge of [French]" wanted to demonstrate to her apprehensive child that with

the use of gesture, she would be able to understand the teacher talking in French

> When we first came here and she saw the classroom there was a little apprehension...She had a gum wrap in her hand and I said 'Donne le papier'...she looked at me and she handed the paper and I said 'what did I say'? ...She said 'You asked me to give you the paper.' I said 'no' and I said again. ...She looked at me and she said 'huh' like 'I see what you mean you know.'[...] I said 'See how easy it is you understood what I said without you understanding the words right'! And she's going 'yeh.' And it kind of got rid of the apprehension of not understanding... It was such a simple thing that and the gesture as well because I put out my hand and she figured it out

Even though most of the time teachers know when a child does or does not understand, and that gestures combined with tone of voice, expression, and pictures render the message understandable, remains for some children some misunderstanding wrote a mother in her journal: "He did three crafts at the craft centre but the teacher took them away. He didn't understand why." As will be shown in the last section of this chapter, most children pointed to the neither sad or happy figures in time of lack of understanding toward the teacher message while they claimed to be "very very happy" in time of understanding and time where they were performing in French.

Section III: Children's Initial Experience of French Immersion

Seven of the eight children answered the questionnaire pointing to the three happy to sad faces. Some children also verbally commented on some of the questions. The children's initial experience of immersion will be presented here under four topics: (a) understanding the teacher, (b) talking in French, (c) listening to French, and (d) the children in the immersion classroom.

Understanding the Teacher

All children reported feeling good or happy when they understood what the teacher was saying in French. On the contrary, four of them pointed to the neither sad nor happy figures in a situation where they did not understand the teacher. None of the children pointed to the sad figure in a situation where they did not understand the teacher.

Talking in French

All children said they felt good or happy when they had a question to ask and they knew how to say it in French. Two of the children added that they felt "very very happy" in these situations. However, it is important to note here that most of the time they said they would not use English when questioning the teacher. Three of the children also added that they felt "good" asking questions in English when they did not understand the teacher. It did not appear to bother them not to be able to question the teacher in French except for one child who pointed to the sad figure in these situations.

In a situation where the children are asked by the teacher to express themselves in French and they succeed in doing it, all seven children pointed to the happy faces without any hesitation. They often used the term "good" to describe their feelings when speaking French. In a situation where they did not not know what to say in French, two of the children felt neither sad or happy.

Listening to French

Six of the children pointed to the happy faces when asked if they liked to be in the classroom and if they liked to listen to French. Some of them emphasize what they liked best about the classroom, "I feel happy because I like everyone." Another child adds that he "likes to see friends." A third one said: "I see my friend that makes me very happy." Only one child expresses dislike for school: "I don't like school. Any school. I don't like school....It's just that I don't [ ] learning French." When asked if he would rather be in an English programme, he said yes even though he did not know anyone in the English programme because, "I never been to English."

However, that child still liked aspects of the programme like singing "sometimes." He also "liked being read to and playing ball."

As for the other children, three of them said they would prefer to be in an English kindergarten and the remaining three said they were happy to be in French. When asked which of the French or English programme they thought was easier, the first three answered the English while the remaining three answered the French one. As for the child that said he did not like school, he did not think it would make any difference.

These answers corroborate with the parents and teachers perceptions in that the children's experience of immersion is positive. As expressed by teachers, it seems that being able to respond in French in the classroom makes the children feel proud of themselves or at least "very very happy." Furthermore, the children's few comments also indicate that play and friendship are important aspects of kindergarten. Nevertheless, one should be aware that being unable to respond or question the teacher in French may lead to some degree of unhappiness in some children. According to Schinke-Llano (1989) it is important to provide children in a second language learning situation with silent period. Silent period will allow children to speak in the target language when they feel confident enough to do so. During the silent period "the child is establishing receptive skills before attempting productive ones" (Schinke-Llano, 1989, p. 222). The children's distinction between the English and French kindergarten may also indicate their awareness to the medium used in the instruction. Contrary to what teachers and parents seem to believe, children appear to make a distinction between a French immersion kindergarten and a regular English kindergarten.

Conclusion

Teachers and parents shared a common perception of the children's experience of immersion. They both recognize the importance of the routine in the child's adaptation to the new situation of schooling and for the child to feel secure. They also gave much importance to the gestures used by the teacher to enhance the children comprehension. A mother wrote in her journal: "It was

great for me to see how things are done during class. The use of gestures when words are not understood and using English when necessary." In both groups, analogy with hard of hearing children was proposed. One mother was referring to the teacher's use of signed language and one teacher was talking of the children's resemblance to hard of hearing children. He thought these resemblances lead the immersion children to develop listening and questioning strategies that he felt would not be present in children from a regular English programme. According to Lavallée (1990), the teacher's use of paralanguage strategies provide "a strong supportive role in the development of meaning" (p. 72). After observing kindergarten children's patterns of communication in social interaction in immersion with a special emphasis on the role of teacher input over an eight month period, Lavallée concludes that over time, as the children became more able to actively participate in their language learning, "the initially dominant supportive paralanguage strategies used by the teacher 'self-destructed' to be replaced by 'collaborative' language strategies" (p. abstract). The paralanguage strategies described by Lavallée include language, paraverbal, kinesic and proxemic strategies. Lavallée's collaborative language strategies refer to the students' increased involvement "in the physical organization of their activities, manipulating materials and directing dialogue" (p. 73).

Similarly, the young infant learning her/his first language will rely on paralanguage strategies. It is these strategies that allow the parents to understand the infant's need that she/he cannot yet verbally express. In the immersion classroom, it is the teacher who uses these strategies to help illustrate the French words the children do not yet know and understand. Whether the children are deaf or hearing, symbolic gestures are used by infants until around the middle of the second year (Acredolo & Goodwyn, 1990). These gestures "are used in a variety of contexts, occur quite frequently in the daily life of the child, and are routinely interpreted by parents as if they were words" (p. 68). Acredolo and Goodwyn also recognize the important role gestures play in language development. For the hearing children, they say, gestures are replaced by verbal language

sometimes in the middle of the children's second year. The role of gestures in language development suggested by Acredolo and Goodwyn could explain the switch from paralanguage strategies to cooperation strategies in the immersion classroom as reported by Lavallée (1990).

Whether or not the children develop questioning strategies in the immersion classroom is not addressed by Lavallée. However, the only example of student-teacher evolving dialogue she presents would confirm the teacher's belief that most of the time, the questions' answers are included in the children's questioning. In Lavallée's example, the questions asked by the children would either lead to a yes or no answer, or would include the answer in the question: "Did you meet any...baby dolphins"?; "Did you eat coconut"?; Did you play in the sand"? (p. 65) Questioning is known to be important in learning and thinking (Morgan & Saxton, 1991). Of course, one may wonder why a five year old would not use any higher function questioning in the immersion classroom? Even though the children may use their first language to question the teacher, one must not forget that in most cases, the children will be answered in the second language. From a language development point of view, asking higher level questions that may lead to comparisons, relation between concepts, and reflection for example may place a child in a situation where she/he does not have the necessary knowledge of L2 to understand and reflect on the teacher's answer. Even though the child might be five years' old, that child's language development of L2 does not reflect her/his language development of L1, especially not at the kindergarten level where she/he is at her/his first experience of L2 learning. In fact, it is the immersion kindergarten language development level that lead teachers to use paralanguage strategies to negotiate meanings (Lavallée, 1990).

The children's increased understanding and knowledge of L2 allow the teacher to decrease her/his use of paralanguage strategies and give the children the opportunity to increase their active participation and lower level questioning to negotiate meaning. However, it would be very interesting to address the issue of the immersion children's questioning strategies at a higher grade level

once the development of L2 is advanced enough to verbally communicate with the teacher using L2.

To promote effective thinking and higher level questioning, one must also take into account the classroom climate. "The use of a relaxed, supportive climate in which children feel free and secure" is recommended by Moore (1961, cited in Harmin, 1963, p. 23). At the kindergarten level, the ambiguity a child may sense from her/his teacher elaborated comment expressed in L2 would probably not contribute to the development of a relaxed and supportive climate. At a higher grade level, the child's knowledge of L2 would probably allow for the development of such climate, as proposed by Moore. At a higher level, the L2 development of the child would probably not get in the way of understanding elaborated comments of the teacher in L2.

Parents and teachers also think of the immersion classroom at the kindergarten level as a place where the children play at guessing what the teacher is saying. Parents often tell or write of their children playing with the language once at home. Furthermore, they also say that kindergarten is a place where their children are playing and not necessarily making the distinction between French and English. As for the children's experience, they in part confirm the parents' and teachers' perception of immersion. In fact, most of them feel good or happy being in the classroom. They say the best part about kindergarten is play and friends. They enjoy learning French through different ways and they enjoy being able to express themselves in French. The children's love for play, however, would probably be found in any regular kindergarten. In fact, kindergarten and its learning activities are all developed around the concept of play (Brewer, 1992). When looking at the nature and the meaning of classroom experience in French immersion kindergarten, with a special emphasis on culture and ritual, Weber and Tardif (1991a) indicate that "...one of the ways in which children and teachers succeeded in their collective negotiation of meaning in the immersion classroom was by drawing initially on shared elements of the culture of childhood" (p. 98). These elements of the culture of

childhood include singing and playing. These elements should also be found in other kindergartens and programmes.

However, it seems possible that the children are more aware of the linguistic context of their kindergarten classroom than what the parents seem to believe. Some of them feel neither sad nor happy when in situations where they did not understand the teacher or where they were not able to tell in French what they were asked. They may feel less confident when unable to express themselves in French when asked to or unable to understand what the teacher is saying in French. Furthermore, they do make a distinction between the French and English programme when asked which of the two programmes they would prefer. Only one of the seven children said he did not care because he did not like school. The remaining six children were divided, some thinking they would prefer the English kindergarten, others thinking they were happy with their actual programme. Furthermore, these six children were also divided about whether or not French kindergarten was harder than English kindergarten.

The children's reported feelings when using French and when in the classroom may also confirm parents' and teachers' perceptions of a sense of accomplishment when using French, and in general a more positive experience of initial immersion in kindergarten.

CHAPTER V
TWO IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES

This chapter divided into two sections, presents an in-depth look at two children's experience of total immersion. These case studies were made possible because of the complete nature of the data available for these two children. Of the original ten children, only Marc and Natalie had complete data from both parents and teacher for the entire length of the study. Marc's and Natalie's parents and teacher had kept daily observational notes for the entire month where the data were collected. They were also interviewed at the end of that period. Marc, also participated in a short interview. Natalie's interview could not be used since it was not felt she was answering the questions with attention and truthfulness as explained in chapter III. These two case studies will provide the reader with a more detailed perception of the immersion experience of children as perceived by the teacher and parents. Comparison between Marc's and Natalie's experience are also drawn and possible factors influencing their experiences are suggested.

In the first section of this chapter, Natalie and Marc are introduced by the teacher and parents, and a description of aspects of the communication occurring in Marie's classroom is presented. The second part of this chapter presents the emerging themes of these case studies in connection with the literature.

Section 1: Introducing the Participants

Natalie

Based on Natalie's mother's comments regarding her child during the interview and in the daily journal, the following description of Natalie at home and in class is given

> Since she started school, she has a very hungry person living inside of her. We used to have a problem at bedtime, she just wasn't sleepy. Now, at bedtime, within half an hour she'll be sleeping. Since they have been cooking in school, she seems to want to do more helping at home. [For example] we made cookies this morning, lots of help from Natalie. She likes to measure and count out what we need...a little extra flour was

used...but [the] cookies turned out okay! I find that Natalie is more aware of her appearance. Today, she wanted her hair curled. I [also] think she is starting to understand days of the week and weekends. I find she can really understand next day, two days, and the clothes she is going to wear. Natalie's picture making is [also] getting better. Not so much guess work is required to find out what her drawings are. Natalie is a very giving girl.

When she started school, she complained that [the] teacher sat in a chair, but she had to sit on the floor. She now has adjusted and it doesn't bother her. In observing Natalie at school, to me, it seems she holds back. When I am there [in class], she keeps looking over at me more than if I were not there. I think she would pay a little bit more attention [if I was not there]. It seems she is kind of lost at different times because she does not know what exactly is going on because it is in French and madame [teacher] would be saying different things, instruction or whatever, so she almost looks restless or lost. Maybe because it's French it is a little bit more than what it would be if it was English. [However] she does have a hard time even when it's show and tell. That part is in English but she gets very nervous and fidgity when she is doing show and tell. Just standing there and having the whole [attention makes her nervous]. She likes performing and having everybody's attention, but she gets a little bit nervous.

She is at a restless stage. She can't sit still for very long. I don't know if it is because of the French. For the moment, when she is getting instruction, when she can't quite understand what exactly is going on, she does feel a little bit lost. She gets really restless. She will stand up or she'll look around, or, she is just not paying attention. But again she is going through that stage. I think one person will understand [the instruction] and the rest would follow. She now has caught on as to whom to follow.

Natalie's teacher, Marie, describes her in the following terms:

> To me Natalie is just a little girl. Natalie is a little bit more conscious of what she sounds like or if it's correct. She is concerned about whether it is right or wrong. If she does not know what the answer is, she won't even really try. She will say 'Well madame, I don't know' [making] a little bit of [a] joke out of it. I don't know if it's the confidence level, or whatever it is...Rather than try, she's just going to make a joke out of it and giggle nervously. Natalie will listen for a little while and then she'll be distracted by somebody [who] sits beside her. I think that when she just gets to the point where she just [has] had enough, she will just turn herself right off. When she is like that, you can't convince her that maybe that isn't so bad.
>
> When Natalie's mom comes in, it is just about impossible to get her to do anything I want her to do. She kind of regresses. She has a little sister [who] is three, and her mom always brings her little sister, and she acts more like her little sister than she would like a five year old...I don't think that she thinks that [French] is very important. She [will] not use French when playing. I think that maybe at some point given her personality, maybe not this year but in the years to come, she may just decide that she does not want to do this anymore and that might be the end of it.

Marc

Marc's mother portrays her son as being very happy, friendly and enjoying his immersion experience. She also noticed some changes in Marc's behaviour since he began going to school. Here is Marc's mother's statement about her son

> Since the beginning of kindergarten, I noticed he is even more aware of using his manners (please, thank-you). He sleeps soundly at night. Marc generally shows emotions quite easily. He came home with some great artwork. Marc explained this to

> us in detail over supper. He was very happy with his obvious progress in painting. I [am] proud of Marc for using his own initiative to decide to wear snowpants to school so that he could play in the snow at recess without worrying about getting wet. Marc is very open to learning about things. When the earthquakes were happening in Japan, he wanted to take a book on earthquakes. I find the same thing with French. He is always asking, 'Mom how do you say this? Mom how do you say that'? If he forgets something in French [he says] 'How do you say this again, mom'?
>
> I have only been in school once, but when he [was] in the classroom, he [seemed] to really enjoy it. He really likes the other kids. He seemed to get along well with all the kids, although I could pick out two little boys [to whom] he seemed closest. I was expecting Marc to hang around me quite a bit because this was my first time there, but he pretty much went about his own business, not demanding my attention at all. He [waved] at me, or [winked] from across the classroom, but otherwise he was on his own, except when he was at my centre. Marc was so proud to have me and his baby sister there. He listened well [to] stories and songs, and laughed appropriately when Marie sang funny and silly French songs. When I went that one day, Marie was speaking mostly French with them already. He [seemed] to understand, he [seemed] to go along. He knows it's French, but I don't think he really notices it. He really enjoys the programme. He seems to be very comfortable. He likes school, he liked playschool, he likes [his] friends ...in English he would be the same.

Marie also describes Marc as enjoying the immersion programme and as being 'in control.' Here is Marie's portrayal of Marc

> Marc seems to be happy no matter what situation, where he is, why you are doing this or this, it does not seem to matter. He

> is is very focused on whatever [I'm] doing. Marc really does not care [how he sounds in French]. He has a little bit of a speech problem. He is used to people maybe not quite understanding what he is saying, so he is not afraid whether it is right or wrong, or how it sounds...He will try any words. Marc will try, and even if he gets just half [the answer], he will still try that half. He will just keep on, keep on, keep on trying!. He might use French when he is playing. He might say 'Give me the pencil rouge.' The words kind of slip out. He listens very well and he is really not distracted by any outside influence. [For example], somebody comes in, [and] he might turn around and look at him [but] he just remains focused.
>
> Marc's mom can't really come in because she has a little one and she babysits. One time she did come in, she brought the baby in, and Marc was very much the same. I am sure Marc will keep on going [to FI] and he will do well. I don't see Marc even complaining about anything, I really don't. He is just so happy about everything!

As it can be seen from these portraits, Marc's and Natalie's experiences of French immersion kindergarten are somewhat different even though they do share common characteristics. Both children are reported by their mothers to have demonstrated behaviour changes since the beginning of kindergarten. For example, they sleep well at night, Natalie is more aware of her appearance, and Marc is more aware of his manners. However, both children have very different personalities. Natalie's level of self-confidence is questioned by her teacher. In addition, her mother and teacher agree she is not always paying attention. Marie also says she sometimes will not even try to speak French.

Marc's level of self-confidence is not questioned by either his mother or his teacher. On the contrary, Marie and Marc's mother believe he is very attentive to what he is doing. He always seems happy, and he seems to understand what is being said in French in the classroom. It would appear that what the parents and teacher

say about the children are in agreement. However, despite these differences in Marc's and Natalie's daily school lives, Marie comments that overall: "my two students are both with themselves and with the situation. They are both very adaptable to whatever seems to come their way. Marc is very more so than Natalie. Natalie is a little bit more sensitive. They are basically very happy children."

The descriptive theme "communication in French immersion kindergarten" will introduce the readers to the type of communication happening in Marie's classroom.

Communication in French Immersion Kindergarten

In order to better understand the context in which immersion takes place, a description of aspects of the communication occurring in Marie's classroom is presented. My observation/fieldnotes provided me with enough information to get a sense of how the children and teacher were communicating with each other at the beginning of the school year. Marie's interview also brought insights on how communication occurred in an immersion context.

Not surprisingly, a descriptive theme that came out deals with the aspect of communication in kindergarten.

As L.W. Fillmore (1982) and Weber and Tardif (1991a) reported, communication in FI kindergarten is a rather complex process where visual and verbal information interact to be transformed into comprehension. After observing Marie, a FI kindergarten teacher, for a morning, it was obvious that she was using both visual and verbal information to communicate with the children. At the very beginning of the afternoon, verifying attendance in class, Marie called the name of all children one after another: "lever la main si vous êtes ici (raising hand to illustrate 'lever la main')...O.K. tout le monde, on écoute (showing the ears to illustrate listening)...on fait la prière calmement (placing her hands together to illustrate someone praying)...chut, calmement (putting her finger in front of her mouth to illustrate quiet)." Not only does she use gestures to illustrate the meaning of the words, but she also uses her voice and her facial expressions. She is either very calm when it is time for praying or very energetic when it is time to read a French book.

Theatrical teaching would be a good descriptor of her teaching technique.

Communication between teacher and students is not limited to gestures and tone of voice. In fact, the observation provided me with information on the dynamic aspects of teacher use of French and English in the classroom.

Teacher use of French and English

The teacher, the two mothers present in the classroom, and the children make different use of both English and French. Marie is always talking in French. She keeps repeating and repeating the directives in French. She is very attentive to the children, looking into their eyes when talking to them or when answering a question. During our interview, when told she was using a lot of French in class, she responded that she would mostly use French for any of the formal communication. However, she adds, "depending on what we are talking about," she sometimes uses English. Surprisingly, the children seem to understand what is being asked. When they are not sure of what the teacher is saying, some children will ask questions in English, and Marie will answer them in French, showing them were to go and what to do. Marie encourages the children to ask questions or to talk to her even if that is done using English. She says, "They are not shy or afraid to ask me questions in English."

The language dynamic does get even more complex when the aim of the teacher is to have a child talking in French. During that observation, not only did Marie have to express herself in French, but she also had to ensure that the child understood the meaning of the word and that the child understood what she wanted from him/her. For example, while working on the calendar, which is an activity that takes place every morning after the attendance and the prayer, the children were asked to say the date of the day in French and to draw a picture on the calendar to illustrate the weather that day.

The children sat around Marie where the calendar is. It is a big calendar on a chevalet. "Aujourd'hui nous sommes le seize novembre. Qui peut me dire qu'elle chiffre est seize"? (Marie is pointing to the numbered card that each child has in his hand, and she is also looking at each child). A child is showing Marie the number 16 on a piece of

green paper. "Oui, c'est bien, *sixteen*, *seize*. Peux-tu dire le chiffre *seize* en français, *sseeiizze*!!!...*can you say it*".? Marie is forcing the pronunciation of the word 'seize', emphasizing on the sound 's' and the sound 'z'. In a small voice, the little girl repeats the word *seize*.. The child goes to the calendar and places the number 16 on the square. Marie congratulates the girl: "Bravo, c'est très bien"!

As in this example, the teacher will use some English when introducing vocabulary or when asking feedback from the children. The teacher will say a word in English once and will then use that word repetitively in French using gestures and pictures (green card with the number sixteen) to insure the children's comprehension.

At no time during that short observation did a child spontaneously use French. It also appeared that the children would only use French when asked to do so by the teacher. The use of French the children displayed was also strongly related to the teacher's demands and encouragements. Marc's and Natalie's use of French will be looked at in greater detail in the the following section under the theme "the children's feelings toward their schooling experience." Three other themes that emerged from the data will also be presented.

Section 2: Presentation of Themes

In this section of this chapter, four themes that emerged from the data are presented: (a) teacher and child interaction, (b) importance of friendship and play in the children's lives, (c) children's feelings toward their schooling experience, and (d) parental role and feelings toward French immersion kindergarten. Not only are these four themes presented, but commonalities and differences between Marc's and Natalie's experience are looked at from their parents' points of view, their teacher's point of view, and from the children's own perceptions whenever possible. Connection with the literature is made as well. The sources of data from which each theme emerged are presented in the appendix section (Appendix I).

Teacher and Child Interaction

This theme relates to how Marc and Natalie interact with the teacher. The following five sub themes will look at different

aspects of teacher and child interaction: (a) social interaction with the teacher - non academic, (b) social interaction with the teacher - ácademic, (c) English as a means to communicate with the teacher, (d) teacher awareness of the children's needs, and (d) Marc's feelings toward the teacher's demands.

Social Interaction With the Teacher - Non Academic

According to Sobol and Sobol (1987), the kindergarten child as a learner is eager to please adults

> They wish to please their parents most of all, but they usually transfer dependence to their teacher as well. The kindergarten teacher must be very grouchy indeed if your child doesn't like her. Never again will children be so ready to respond to adult wishes. (p. 9)

Not surprisingly, it would appear that both Natalie and Marc grant much importance to their teacher, Marie. Both children want to be acknowledged by her, want to take her presents or something that they believe will interest her, and both of them are trying to please her in many different ways. For instance, Marc's mother tells about one of her son's ideas to please Marie. "Marc was happy because he wore his Star Trek sweatsuit to school today. He told madame that he had a surprise for her - his sweatsuit! He said she really liked it"! Madame, which is the way the children refer to their teacher, did acknowledge Marc's gesture. That same day, she wrote in her journal, "Marc was excited today. He was very proud of his new jogging suit which had the symbol of Star Trek on it." It would appear that Marc was proud of his Star Trek sweatsuit because he was wearing it "for Marie" says his mother. From Marie's journal, it seems that many times during that month, Marc, as well as Natalie, approached her for a variety of reasons that had no direct connection with the kindergarten curriculum. Marc's mother describes her son's feelings toward his teacher in the following terms

> He seems very comfortable with the teacher. I know he wants to please because he just loves her. Everything is 'madame',

> 'madame said', 'madame this', so I know. He is not scared of her. He is so in love with her.

Natalie shares mostly the same feelings as Marc toward her teacher. Natalie's mother gives examples where "she cuts out pictures from catalogues for madame." Natalie's mother continues saying, " She likes to take all kinds of treasures to her teacher." At no time in her journal or during the interview did Marie mention receiving 'treasures' from Natalie. Does Natalie actually give these 'treasures' to her teacher once in school? It is legitimate to ask that question since every time Marc takes or does something special for the teacher, she reports it in her journal as does Marc's mother. As for Natalie, many of the facts that are being reported by her mother do not appear in the teacher's journal. However, there is no doubt that Natalie, too, wants to please her teacher and demonstrates interest in her. Interestingly enough, these marks of interest are demonstrated differently by Natalie than by Marc. From Marie's journal and interview, it does not appear that she receives gifts from Natalie, but she does get some feedback of her interest. Natalie will talk of her teacher to her classmates or will question Marie's relationship with the other children. As Marie puts it

> Natalie had a happy day. She certainly has a sense of humor! She was at the craft table. She told those present (without cracking a smile) that madame was coming to her house tonight for a sleepover.

There is no doubt that Natalie is interested in her teacher. Natalie's mother reports one incident in school where her daughter told her that madame knew everything. Natalie's mother was going to school with Natalie's grand-father to pick her up, and "Marie asked grandpa how a tool from the carpentry area worked. Natalie asked mom secretly 'Why does madame have to listen to Papa?' Until this time I think she thought madame knew everything." In another instance, Natalie questioned the teacher's reason to call her mother: "Madame called to see if I could help out on Hallowe'en party day, on

Friday." Natalie said, "How come she called you? She is my teacher."

It would appear that the distinction in the children's way of demonstrating interest in the teacher is one of nature. Marc favours the direct approach while Natalie chooses the covert one. Marc is approaching the teacher and showing her interesting things while Natalie will talk of her, make believe with her and question the teacher's interest in others. Natalie's way of interacting with the teacher is somewhat typical of five year old children. As explained by Gesell and Ilg (1987), five year olds sometime have difficulty perceiving a situation from another angle: "Il est si penetré de lui-dans-le-monde qu'il sait mal s'écarter de son propre point de vue pour comprendre, par réciprocité, le point de vue des autres" (p. 54). In other words, Natalie has difficulty understanding why the teacher would want to talk to her mother since she is the teacher's pupil.

Social Interaction with the Teacher - Academic

Even though the children seek Marie's attention in a non-academic fashion, they also do so when it relates to their accomplishment in the classroom.

Both children will present the teacher with the work they have accomplished in class, and every day Mary reported in both children's journals their crafts, projects, and other daily activities. The children looking for the teacher's approbation in their daily work is once again not surprising. As reported by Gesell and Ilg (1987), the five year old child wants to have immediate approbation of the teacher following an activity: "L'enfant de 5 ans apporte parfois son travail à la maison mais il désire davantage s'assurer de l'approbation immédiate de son maître, pour se faire féliciter ensuite par sa maman" (p. 73). To go along with Gesell's and Ilg's description of the five year old child in regard to being acknowledged by his teacher first and then by his mother, every day, both children showed Marie their work and just about every day the children's parents reported receiving crafts made in school by their children, Marc very much more than Natalie.

English as a Means to Communicate with the Teacher

The importance of the teacher in Marc's and Natalie's lives is not only a matter of recognition for their work but also a need to verbally communicate with her. The discussion might be a result of a lost glove or a dispute between friends. In any case, they will turn to the teacher to discuss these problems. One might ask how the children feel communicating these problems to Marie since the immersion teacher speaks mostly French in the classroom and the pupils have not yet mastered that new language. Is it feasible to truly communicate with someone using two distinct languages? As already reported in the literature review in the first chapter of this report, Hammerly (1989) does not believe in this type of communication. He believes this type of conversation between a teacher and a child to be "very artificial", resulting in a source of possible emotional difficulty. As for Swain and Lapkin (1981), they do not believe that type of conversation to be of additional stress to the child since the teacher is bilingual and the children are allowed to communicate in English at any time they wish.

For Natalie and Marc, the key element in the conversation they have with the teacher resides in that they do not feel it is wrong to communicate in their first language. Both children are reported by their teacher and parents as engaging in conversation with Marie using English. Natalie's mother clearly expresses the underlying acceptance of the chosen language of communication of the children in the classroom. "Being that madame flips back and forth so easily, and she takes the English as well as the French for the kids,...Natalie will talk English to her..., it does not seem to bother her one way or another. It is not a black mark when she talks English. It is still a positive thing." Marc's mother adds: "He is very comfortable in approaching madame for anything--whether to share some information, just to chat, or to ask for help with something."

Teacher Awareness of the Children's Needs

It would appear that Marie is very sensitive of the children's need to communicate with her. She also explains that she encourages the children to talk to her in any language they choose.

> They are not shy or afraid to ask me questions in English. They know that is okay.because they know that they can't possibly ask me those questions in French because they don't have the background ...I am not like that where they can't ask [me], tell me things that they want to tell me...They know what my expectations are.

Even though the aim of this study is not to determine whether or not Marie is a 'good' teacher, it would appear that she meets the good teacher's qualities as suggested by Santrock and Yussen (1992) when it comes to adaptability, warmth, flexibility and awareness of individual differences. Natalie's mother reports that, "All the kids...really listen [to] and admire madame." As for Marc, "He thinks she's super-human," and his mother adds, "I'm sure of it"!.

Marc's Feelings Toward the Teacher's Demands

Even though all participants agree on Marie's qualities as a teacher, Marc gives importance to whether or not he can understand her instruction in French. When asked how he felt when he did not understand the teacher's instruction in French, he pointed to the sad face. However, he promptly added that when he does not know what the teacher wants, he "asks [a] question"! He did point to the happy face with a large smile when asked how he felt when he understands the teacher's directives. If Marc may feel sad when he does not understand the directive, he still prefers doing kindergarten in French rather than in English. Such responses were not available from Natalie, as explained in the methodology chapter.

Friendship And Play At The Center Of The Child's Kindergarten Experience

Since play is recognized as being extremely important in the child's total development (see Wortham, 1994; Santrock & Yussen, 1992; Gesell & Ilg, 1977, 1989), it is not surprising to observe the great place it has in Natalie's and Marc's daily routines not only in school but also out of school. For the purpose of this study, the importance of play for the two participants will be looked at in the school. We acknowledge the great role play has outside school and that it is part of the children's daily routine, but the question to

pose here is whether or not Marc's and Natalie's play in kindergarten is limited by the linguistic demands and to identify some of their playing behaviours as they emerged from the data. These playing behaviours are presented in the four following sub-themes: (a) learning while playing, (b) playing behaviours and friendship, (c) Natalie's classroom behaviours: a lack of flexibility, and (d) Natalie's safe island.

Learning While Playing

Wortham (1994) talks of play and its role in the following terms

> The role of play seems to be one of the most difficult aspects of young children's development and learning for many educators and parents to understand. ...For many parents and teachers, learning is associated with sitting quietly and listening to the teacher or working preschool workbook pages. To the contrary, play provides opportunities for active exploration of information, social interactions, and physical activity essential to learning and development. (p. 191)

For Marc and Natalie, play is certainly not limited, and learning is set to occur while playing. The most meaningful words to express that joy of playing while learning came from Marc when he was questioned:

Interviewer:	"Do you like kindergarten"?
Marc:	"Yes."
Interviewer:	"Why do you like to be in the classroom"?
Marc	"Because you can play, and you get to learn."

Every day spent in kindergarten is filled with play and activity. Whether it is a supervised activity, such as 'show and tell', or semi-structured activity such as 'centre', or simply 'free play', both Natalie and Marc enjoy these activities. According to Wortham (1994), the centres are truly learning centres. In Marie's classroom, the instruction and the play associated with it are built around

themes. It is proposed by Wortham that, "the format for theme planning facilitates an understanding on the part of both teacher and students about how different content areas are related to each other and how individual activities can support learning in several areas of development and content areas" (p. 196).

Halloween was one of the themes proposed to the children during this study. For example, from the teacher's journal concerning both Marc and Natalie, it is seen that the children learned songs with Halloween vocabulary such as "sorcière", "citrouille", and "hibou", and that they also had some "projects" to complete such as making a skeleton and a Jack-o-lantern. As it can be seen, the games or activities do not necessarily occur in French, but the children are taught the French vocabulary while cutting their skeletons, and talking in English with their classmates. For example, Marie describes one of Marc's skeletons and how the French language is introduced in the activity: "He worked carefully to make a skeleton and did his Jack-o-lantern willingly. When asked to identify its parts, he didn't know 'les yeux' or 'le nez', but was proud that he knew 'bouche'." "You know madame, like a 'bush', he said."

Marie reports that most of the time the children will not play in English

> Whenever I have a game ...it would be more as a centre, and then they are doing it more like in English. Like today, they had a bear counting. It was a little race where you threw the dice and you move your bear, and she did not go, but he did, but he counted in English.

Marie's statement is very important here because even though neither Natalie nor Marc will play in French except for some occasions where a word would 'slip out' of Marc's mouth, says Marie, the way they play and the way they participate in the class activities are very different. These differences are presented in the next sub-themes.

Playing Behaviours and Friendship

As explained by Marie

> stuff that is the routine...'bonjour madame', when we have a guest they say 'bonjour' to whomever is there and 'au revoir' and ...we count the numbers on the calendar every day, and Natalie is very much less interested in this stuff. Marc is very focused on whatever you are doing.

What is so different in Marc's and Natalie's attitude toward class activities? The teacher describes Marc as paying a lot of attention to what is going on in class. She even says,"You could put him anywhere and he would still listen." The important thing here is that he does not only listen, he participates in all proposed activities with a remarkable flexibility. Marie says Marc "plays in more places with more different people." In her journal, she reports Marc as playing at different centres and with different people even though he has his favourite friend. Not only is he playing with different people, but he also wants to make new friends. As reported in Marie's journal, "I enjoyed especially watching him and another little boy writing their phone numbers, so they could play after school." On the same day, Marc's mother also reported, "He also came home with a scrap piece of paper with child-like printing on it--a boy's name and phone number. He's exchanged numbers with a little friend before." Many times in both the teacher's and the mother's journal, Marc appeared to be very social and enjoying different games.

It is not surprising to acknowledge Marc's behaviours toward play and friendship. Play is not only a means to learn but also serves a socialization role. Marc is as open to friendship as he is to new games, and, as we are going to see later, as he is to new language. Maybe exploring a new language is another interesting game for Marc.

Natalie does not share that flexibility toward play and friendship...and the French language. We do not wish to discuss the

children's feelings or reactions to second language learning, but it was felt that making the possible connection between friend, play, and language learning in an immersion situation was important at this point. However, Marc's and Natalie's openness to French will be explored further when we discuss the next theme, that is the children's feelings toward French immersion kindergarten.

Natalie's Classroom Behaviours: A Lack of Flexibility

How is Natalie's participation in the classroom in regard to class activities? The teacher explains

> "Natalie, you know, she is more worried about who is sitting beside her, who so and so is sitting beside her...I have a little bit harder time to keep her on task...She goes ..., mostly to the craft and just about always with the same little girl. She kind of follows her around...They have a very interesting relationship those two little girls..."

Just about every day Marie reports Natalie playing at the same centre with that same little girl, whom we will call Jann. Natalie and Jann are seen together for playtime, for freeplay, for snack, in the bus and even at home and once for a sleepover. Natalie's day becomes dependant on the quality of her relationship with that special friend. On different occasions Marie tells about Natalie's feelings of sadness. "At one point during centre time, Jann was playing with someone else and Natalie was very upset because she wanted to 'save her as a friend'...It did not take long and the poor little girl came to me heartbroken. Jann was playing with someone else and Natalie did not want to share her..."

As for Natalie's mother, she wrote in her journal: "Natalie was crying when she was getting off the bus. Jann, Natalie's friend, wanted something of Natalie's, but Natalie did not want to give it to her so Jann said, 'I won't be your friend.' Hence Natalie's tears."

Having a fight or being told 'I won't be your friend' is typical of five year olds. However, it would appear that for Natalie, they are events that cause a lot of tears and on many occasions. It happens at home and in school but and only with the same little girl. As for

the class activities, Natalie will play at mostly the same centres but will also quit paying attention in most of the instructional time. As her mother wrote in her journal after observing her daughter in class:

> At the very beginning of the class, they go for the calendar, they count, she actually does the counting part not too bad. So far that part she will rattle through just like the rest of the kids, and then, as it gets progressively into the instructional part of the class, the story or whatever it is, she will kind of get lost, and then you can see that she will get restless. She does not like to sit still for any length of time, but, I think because it is French...it is not holding her attention as much.

Natalie's Safe Island

Is Natalie's playing only with the same little girl at only the same centre as a result of feeling "lost" in the immersion context? Or is that specific craft centre or special friend a way for Natalie to adapt to the linguistic demand brought on by the immersion context? Maybe she finds herself in a more secure position in the craft centre when all the songs that are being sung and vocabulary that is being introduced in other games or centres are unknown and therefore a possible generator of insecurity?

As mentioned by Faw and Belkin (1989), "The child who fails at a task in the outer world can retreat into what Erikson calls the "safe island" that play provides and can overcome the feelings of failure within his or her own set of boundaries" (p. 338). Hendrick et al. (1993) suggest that play "serves as a forum in which children control events" (p. 69). It is legitimate to propose that Natalie's craft centre might be her "safe island" where she can control the event. Playing in that craft centre, she does not have to talk French, and she does not have to listen to it, either. As for Jann, Natalie might enjoy her presence and enjoy the fact that she can communicate in English with her. Referring to Jann, Natalie's mother wrote in her journal "...there is a little girl [whom] she is buddied up with. She does not speak French either, so I think they

use each other as a crutch so to speak." Furthermore, it would appear that Jann lives in the same neighborhood as Natalie which brings another element of security for Natalie.

As we are about to see in the discussion of the next theme, Natalie does not communicate much in French. The common answer she gives to the teacher when asked to participate in a French activity is,"Madame, you know I don't know that."

Feelings Toward French Immersion Kindergarten

In this theme, we wish to look at the children's feelings and reactions relating to the use of French in the classroom and its transfer to the home. The following points emerged: (a) Marc's enthusiasm toward learning French, (b) Marc's use of French outside the school, (c) Marc's feelings toward French immersion kindergarten, (d) Natalie's difficulty in learning French, (e) Natalie's use of French outside the school, and (f) children's parental support.

Both Natalie and Marc are very special children, with their own personalities and experiences. I do not wish to compare them in a negative way but rather look at what makes their French learning experiences different and how that could be explained or simply understood given the information provided by the teacher, the children's parents and through the children's interviews.

Even though French immersion kindergarten children do not truly communicate in French in their first year, they do acquire some knowledge of French through the classroom activities, whether they are structured or semi-structured. French vocabulary is also introduced through singing and through field trips such as a visit to the dentist's office. For some children, it seems that the language is easy to pick-up while for others, it is a task that is hard to accomplish. Marc and Natalie do have very different experiences of second language learning.

Marc's Enthusiasm Toward Learning French

Marc's French learning is happening slowly and smoothly without any apparent signs of anxiety or discomfort. Regarding Marc's participation in any activities that introduce French vocabulary or that assess the children's French knowledge, Marie notes in her journal: "He continued to be enthusiastic and very

successful with our French Halloween vocabulary and songs." She also acknowledges that "Marc will keep on trying and trying...He will persevere using French. As it is seen in the classroom, Marie "watched him carefully to see if he was singing along but he wasn't. He was trying to mouth the words though," and a few days later, "He tried to sing along and was very excited when he was the first to say the word 'hibou' correctly." As this example shows, not only is he trying and he does persevere, but he also succeeds in communicating in French. Both the teacher's interview and journal were filled with examples of Marc's participation and success in using French. This is probably the most important aspect of Marc's immersion experience: Marc's success in learning French. It is therefore not surprising to observe Marc's enthusiasm toward the French language and its use in the classroom. It is even less surprising to find Marc trying to use French and persevering. As explained by Hendrick et al. (1993), "Competence grows when children feel successful enough to keep trying and to risk challenges" (p. 70).

Marc's Use of French Outside the School

Marc will "risk challenges" in school but also at home. As his mother says, "He almost shows off sometimes." Marc's mother reports her son using French at home with her and his father, with his friends, and also outside the home: "We were at the store a couple of days ago and there were kids there, and when he left the kids said good bye and he said 'au revoir.' Totally on his own...He will be with family, they do not know French at all, but at Hallowe'en he said 'skeleton' and 'there is a witch' and...speaking in French." Marc will also demonstrate some of his French knowledge when around French speaking people. For example, his mother reported in her journal: "Yesterday, while getting his skates on at his lesson, he overheard a Francophone father speaking to his son. Suddenly, Marc, whom I'm sure was trying to fit in/show off, started singing the first French song they learned in kindergarten, in quite a loud voice, 'nous allons en autobus, autobus, autobus...'." Not surprisingly, Marc will initiate French ritual at home. When in the classroom, all children are asked to count the days on the calendar in French. As

explained by Marc's mother, he will do the same at home at bedtime: "Before he goes to bed he marks up his calendar and will count it first in English and he will [then] count it in French...He does demonstrate [French] a lot." Marc shares his day at kindergarten with his mother and father at supper time. He likes to read them French words he learned and sing new songs he learned

> Last evening at supper, he said he learned a new French word. He said when the teacher taught the kids the word, she told them not to laugh. He said he didn't laugh when he heard, but he nonetheless instructed me not to laugh either when I heard it. He then said, 'Cabbage in French is choux- get it, mom? shoe?' I didn't laugh. He appeared almost disgusted that someone would laugh at a French word.

His mother concluded that in an immersion context, "He is just fine. He comes home in a good mood. He loves going to school. Obviously, it is not a problem for him. Up to and including now, he continues to show excitement and enthusiasm for learning French and for kindergarten in general."

Marc's Feelings Toward French Immersion Kindergarten

As for Marc, when asked if he would prefer to do kindergarten in French or in English, he simply answered "French." Most important of all, he told his mother French "is so easy mom" and in comparing his kindergarten experience with a friend's, he said, "I sure am lucky. My kindergarten is so fun"!

Natalie's Difficulty in Learning French

Natalie has a harder time learning French. She will often not respond to the teacher or will simply answer, "Well, madame, I don't know" or "Madame, you know I can't remember those." The teacher explains that, when it comes to using French

> She would not want to try unless she was really sure...At the beginning of the year, there were a couple of times where I said, 'Come on, Natalie, you can try it again' and tears came to the eyes and that was it.. She had reached her level of

> frustration and there is no point to pushing her anymore. She gets to a certain point and then if she has decided that that's that...forget it! You cannot change her mind at all.

The teacher is sometimes uncertain of how far she can push her without being hard on her or of how much Natalie really knows

> Natalie, most often, I think she feels comfortable with what I am asking of her, but at times where she does not even try 'Madame, you know I don't know that,' I kind of wonder sometimes about her if she is comfortable about what I am asking her to do. I think she is able to do it but she just sometimes gives up a little bit too quickly.

In her journal, Marie reports Natalie as "not able to keep up" when doing activities with numbers up to thirty. When asked the Hallowe'en vocabulary, Marie, "had hoped she would use 'les yeux, le nez or la bouche' when asked the different parts of her Jack-o-lantern but she just laughed and said, 'Oh madame, you know I don't know these,' and off she went." When it comes to using French, Marie's journal and interview is filled with examples reflecting Natalie's difficulty with French.

Natalie does not have much success with her use of French. Even if she often responds to the teacher that she does not know, she sometimes risks an answer which turns out to be wrong most of the time: "After free play in the gym, I asked her in French to name her group (green) for me so the rest of her group could join her. She didn't understand, and when someone translated the question, she gave me the wrong answer."

According to Gesell and Ilg (1989), kindergarten pupils are eager to learn. However, kindergarten children want to demonstrate what they feel they can do, not what they feel they can't. Kindergarten pupils want to learn what they feel they can accomplish. This five year old characteristic might apply to Natalie. Maybe she is refusing to answer the teacher since she does not feel confident enough in her French knowledge. Even more, when Natalie

finally does try to respond to the teacher, she is faced with failure. According to Gesell and Ilg, failure is not something children want to demonstrate. Talking of the social-emotional development of children between five and eight year olds, Wortham (1994) reports

> Achievement and social acceptance become important parts of the child's life. If the child feels successful and achievement is a rewarding effort, the child develops a sense of industry. To the contrary, if the child feels unsuccessful, unpopular, and feels he or she cannot succeed in achieving, a sense of inferiority develops. (p. 94)

I do not wish to imply here that Natalie feels unpopular, but it seems only plausible that she might feel unsuccessful in using French, hence her refusal to even try to participate in the activities where the use of French is required. To go along with Wortham, Marie sometimes wonders about Natalie's level of self-confidence in trying to explain her attitude toward the use of second language. Marie also questions Natalie's participation in the immersion programme in future years. "I don't know...but that would be a suspicion I have that maybe one day it will be too hard for her and too frustrating, and she would just not feel right about it. I don't know, that is just a feeling."

Natalie's Use of French Outside the School

Natalie's use of French at home is somewhat irregular. As her mother explains: "Once she gets started she really likes to show off her new language, but at times she just would rather not." As she does in school, she will only use the French that she really knows at home. For example, "Her dad said one day when listening to her count in French 'Did she just learn that today?' She had counted to ten, faultless." It was the first time she was actually counting in French in front of her father.

Natalie will question her mother about French words at times. As her mother explains, Natalie makes up her own French: "Her new language is funny at times. She'll ask mom how to say a word in French, but mom doesn't know French, so she 'll make up French

words for those she doesn't know...She makes [up] a lot of this stuff." Natalie will also teach her nine month old sister French words and songs with a mixture of the actual French and the made-up French. She will not teach her sister in front of her parents. Natalie's mother explains: "At home I found her, like if I sneak up on her and her sister when they are playing in the bedroom, she will be trying to teach her sister different things in French." Young children making up language when they are playing is often seen. However, from Natalie's mother's journal and interview, it would appear that she will only demonstrate what she knows and that most of the time, she will only be using French with her sister, who, of course, cannot tell if it is right or wrong. When with her mother, she will at times say a few words in French, but once again, Natalie's mother does not speak or understand French and Natalie only uses words she knows when she is being observed.

Once outside the house, on one occasion, Natalie did demonstrate her new language. Her mother wrote in her journal

> Her grandmother's family they know still how to speak French because my husband's mom and dad both were French. We were over there, and the aunties were all there, and to start with, you can talk French to these ladies because they know how to speak French. And she is kind of shy, and then after she said, I think it was 'bonjour' or something, and then the one auntie especially...started...talking lots of French and I said, 'Woe, she does not know that much French...but she knows how to count, she knows a couple of songs', and so she counted for them and they applauded and said she was good, you know, and she was just strutting around...like crazy...Then we had to finally make her stop because she was getting all carried away...She does, I think, feel very proud that she can do something that we don't do.

That example, I believe, is very important. For the first time is it clearly shown that Natalie uses French successfully and is rewarded by some elderly lady's praise. Natalie did not want to stop!

When going home, Natalie's mother told about her daughter saying 'rouge' for the red lights and 'vert' for the green light. It would appear that Natalie was proud and that she was eager to try more French for a short span of time on her way back home.

Children's Parental Support

An important distinction in Marc's and Natalie's experiences of French immersion is in the forms of support they have at home. Natalie's mother does not speak or understand French. She is not able to help Natalie when it comes to translating a word from English to French, and hence Natalie makes up her own French. Natalie uses her made up French to play at home, but she hides it in school. Natalie's mother confirms that her daughter "basically does it all alone."

As for Marc, he gets more support when it comes to French since his mother knows French. However, she insists that she does not speak French at home. "It is not as easy for me to speak in French as it is to speak in English." Nevertheless, whenever Marc has a question regarding the meaning of a word, he just asks his mother. Whenever he has learned new words or songs in French, he enjoys sharing with his mother and father. But most important of all, his mother writes of Marc and her singing French songs together, and reading French together. Natalie does not get this extra help in learning French. She does not read in French with her mother, and neither does she sing in French with her. The most her mother can acknowledge, when Natalie sings a French song, is that "it sounded similar to songs they sing at kindergarten."

This fundamental distinction in the form of support Marc and Natalie get from their families might have an impact on the children's second language learning. Investigating nine previously enrolled French immersion students' success in switching to the English programme, Bruck (1979) reported that many parents felt that once their children were in English, "they can now help with schoolwork--something many could not do previously because of a lack of competence in French" (p. 92). Bruck adds that the parents feel more comfortable with the child in the English stream "along with new greater parental involvement in schoolwork, contributes to

the child's adjustment to the English stream" (p. 92). It seems only logical to suspect that a greater parental involvement in the young child's school-related French activities may contribute to the child's achievement in a second language. With the help of his mother, Marc has the opportunity to discover and to practise his new language using proper vocabulary. Marc also can relate to his mother knowing French. He can identify himself with her. Natalie has none of these advantages. The distinction in the parental support Natalie and Marc have brings us to the fourth and last theme which consists of the parents' roles and feelings toward the French immersion programme.

Parental Role and Feeling Toward French Immersion Kindergarten

Both parents' interviews provided information on their roles and feelings toward the immersion programme. The following points will be discussed: (a) parental involvement in the children's schooling experience: special meaning for Natalie, (b) forms of parental support, (c) school philosophy, and (d) parents' reasons for enrolling their children in French immersion: internal vs external factors.

Parental Involvement in the Children Schooling Experience: Special Meaning for Natalie

It is now well documented that parental involvement in early childhood programmes is a variable of success. Wortham (1994) reports

> The extensive research conducted on intervention programs for young children in recent decades has revealed that parent involvement is an essential factor in successful programs. Although the majority of parents of young children are employed, they need information on how they can help their children and the educational or caregiving setting. They also may need help in understanding how important their role is for the child's success in development and learning (Botyer, 1989).

Marie encourages the children's parents to go into the classroom on a voluntary basis. She sometimes ask parents to

participate in field trips and special activities. While this data was being collected, two special activities and one field trip occurred. The 'fun night' at school was a source of excitement for Natalie. Natalie's mother wrote in her journal

> Tonight is fun night at the school. Already she has asked about six times when dad and her were going to go to school. Mom's going to stay home with [the sister]. So this is the first time dad has gone to school with her. Tonight it was 'Let's hurry and eat supper so I can go to school with dad.' Only one problem--it's only 5:00 and dad's not home yet. Excitement is high.

The Teddy Bear Breakfast was also a source of excitement for Natalie. Marie reports in her journal: "Natalie had a great day. She was happy and excited about our Teddy Bears and Breakfast. She enjoyed showing her teddy and ate up all her porridge! She really enjoyed the felt board story of the three bears." Natalie's mother, being present in class that day, reported that "she made teddy finger puppets for all of the family."

Like the Teddy Bear Breakfast and the Fun Night, the visit to the dentist and her birthday party at school were great sources of pleasure for Natalie. Natalie's mother relates the great event

> Tomorrow is birthday day so we made cupcakes tonight. Natalie helped do the mixing and the filling of the cupcake pans...She was really excited about handing out cupcakes to her classmates. When we had six left she began to worry we wouldn't have enough, but we made it.

That same day Natalie's teacher commented: "Today was birthday party day and we were celebrating Natalie's birthday. She was very preoccupied by this whole event and seemed to be interested in little else."

As it can be seen, for Natalie, kindergarten remains a great source of excitement and pleasure. Even though she seems to have

difficulties in the academic part of the programme, she is participating well and with a lot of excitement in all other activities. Marc, too, loves these activities, but for Natalie, they have a special meaning since these are the times when she enjoys herself and willingly participates in the prescribed activities. In both Marie's and Natalie's mother's journal, never a negative comment is made in regard to her participation in non-academic tasks. It is also good to acknowledge all the emphasis the programme gives to parent participation in the children's school lives. To involve the family in kindergarten is one of Alberta Education's Early Childhood Services' philosophies. Here are four beliefs an Early Childhood Services system should include when it comes to family:

> - The dignity and worth of the family must be respected and enhanced.
> - The family, in its various forms, is a fundamental and an important unit in society. Its function in meeting the developmental and special needs of children must be recognized and supported.
> - Effective programs require the commitment of parents and other individuals.
> - Parents have the right and the responsibility to be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of programs for their children and themselves. (p. 1)
>
> According to Alberta Education Early Childhood Services
>
> Parent involvement is any activity which brings parents into a special relationship with their child, the child's teacher, or community resource persons through which the parent is enabled to assist their child's development and to experience personal growth. Parent involvement in their children's educational program brings about benefits for the child, the parent and the educational program. (p.14)

Powell (1989) explains three assumptions underlying the importance of parental presence in the children's early childhood programme to achieve continuity between the children's families and early childhood programs:

> 1) Discontinuities exist between families and nonfamilial early childhood settings;
> 2) Discontinuities may have negative effects on children (and conversely, continuity between settings is beneficial to children); and
> 3) Communication between parents and early childhood program staff can increase the level of continuity between home and program(s). (p. 23)

Forms of Parental Support

There is no doubt that Marc's and Natalie's school encourages parental participation. Natalie's mother goes to class with Natalie. Natalie "has a little sister [who] is three, and her mom always brings her little sister," says Marie. That is probably the more evident form of support Natalie gets from her family. Natalie's mother does not have the knowledge of French to help her daughter practise the language, but she definitely is present in other school related activities. And as previously mentioned, there is no doubt that Natalie is successful in non-academic tasks in kindergarten. Given the importance of the parental presence in the child's kindergarten experience reported in the literature, it seems plausible that Natalie's mother's presence and help in non-academic tasks have a positive effect on her daughter's kindergarten non-academic experience. Natalie might feel supported by her mother and feel confident in abilities other than French.

"Marc's mom can't really come in because she has her little one and she babysits, although I think one time she did come in," says Marie. Marc's mother is not as present as Natalie's mother in class, but she still is involved with the programme: "I am on the kindergarten committee," she shared. This probably presents the greatest difference in the parent involvement of their children's

first schooling experience, and provides, therefore, a different type of support for the child.

Even though Natalie has difficulty with the French aspect of her kindergarten programme, she is reported by both her mother and teacher as being "happy." Natalie's mother says, "She...likes the play part of kindergarten the best." And her mother adds, "Whenever she gets off the bus,...I think that most times she comes off the bus, she is just bouncing all over the place." Marie, too, reported that both Marc and Natalie "are basically very happy children...Both for the moment in class, they seem happy to be there. I mean, they come off the bus and they run, smiling and (teacher laughs). There is no question that they are happy."

The children's happiness in the programme or in any given programme is crucial, says Wortham (1994)

> Children's early school experiences in successful learning are particularly critical for the development of positive self-esteem and a sense of industry...The kind of school setting encountered can be an important factor in whether the child will develop a positive or negative picture of his or her ability (Bredekamp, 1987). A school that recognizes the normal variation in children's development in this transitional period, as well as normal differences in language, motor, and social development, will organize kindergarten and primary grades to maximize the child's developmental strengths to ensure success and positive self-image. Schools where grade-level curriculum is fixed and achievement on standardized tests controls curriculum and instruction in the primary grades are more likely to have many young students who receive negative feedback and subsequently develop a negative self-image and feelings of inferiority (Santrock, 1990, p. 95).

According to Wortham, Natalie's difficulties in French could have had larger implication for the development of her self-image and a sense of industry if the school she attended was offering a

curriculum based instruction, but luckily enough, the school she attends favours the children's development of social skills. The next sub-theme presents the school philosophy as seen by Marc's mother.

School Philosophy

Marc's mother explains the school philosophy

> A lot of parents have problems because they feel the kindergarten [doesn't] do enough academics. We are more considering developing them socially and making them have fun. I was so happy to hear that...I am just very, very glad with their philosophy.

Natalie's mother is also pleased with Marie. She says that all the children in the class "admire" her. Marc's mother's excitement for the school's philosophy and the programme they are offering is seen in many instances in her journal and during her interview. She comments

> Whether English or French, it just seems like a really good programme. But French or not, the school, I just really like it. They are really good with the kids, and they get to help, like to go to the office and that is the best thing. They just cannot wait to be special helper so it is just their own little programme that is really good. I am so happy with the school. Right now, I am just so glad because it so important to choose [a] good school, and, French or not, ...I really wanted him to have a good experience. I did not want him to go to school and often get scared by it or...feel he's not good enough or feel he's not doing well enough or anything, so I was really worried about picking which school, which programmes. I am so happy. I am just so happy with everything I have seen and I only got to school once during the day, and I was just so happy. I said to my husband, 'We just picked this good programme.' The principal is very good, too. It is so, just kids first, you know. I am so impressed by that.

It is evident that Marc's mother is pleased with the programme, and it would appear that Natalie's mother is happy with it, too. The parents' feelings toward the programmes are, without a doubt, a good source of support for their children. But why in the first place did Marc's and Natalie's parents want their children to be enrolled in an immersion programme? The next point presents the parents' reasons for enrolling their children in French immersion.

Parents Reasons for Enrolling Their Children in French Immersion: Internal vs External Factors

Natalie's parents believe in the advantages knowing a second language gives to the individual in our society. Natalie's mother explains

> My husband and I both think that in this day, any second language is a benefit to anybody, and I kind of regret that when I was going in school that we started in grade 10 to speak French. Well, it's [an] old saying to say that they learn as much as they can within the first five years or ten years of their lives and after that you kind of programme it. You got to beat it in. So if she can keep it up, it would be so easy for her to learn at this age because I think she does pick up things relatively fast. I think that French, especially in Canada,...it gives them an extra edge.

Marc's mother's comments on the reason for enrolling her son in the French immersion programme were somewhat different

> My husband and I feel very strongly about him going in French immersion. I hope we never come across saying 'you've got to do this, you've got to do really well.' I was really worried about that when we first put him to kindergarten. I was the French one...I don't want him...to be in a new school, this is new to him, going on the bus, I was so scared. We have never pressured Marc (at least not to my knowledge) to learn French. I think he would feel comfortable telling us if he did not enjoy any part of kindergarten. Anyhow, I came from the classroom

feeling very proud of how Marc's doing--not just in school but how he's growing socially.

It would appear that the parents' reasons for enrolling Natalie are extrinsic while they are intrinsic for Marc's. Natalie's parents want their child to learn French for possible advantages in the society. On the other hand, Marc's mother comes from a French family. Marc's parents' reasons for enrolling their son in FI seem to be of a more personal nature. It could be another factor that somehow influences the children's motivation to learn French. Once again, that possible influence favours Marc.

CHAPTER VI
OVERVIEW OF STUDY

As just explored, Marc's and Natalie's total early immersion kindergarten experience are marked with a number of differences in regard to their friendship and play behaviours, their success in the instructional part of the programme, their use of French outside the classroom, and the types of parental support and involvement in their schooling experiences.

Natalie's Experience in French Immersion: Parents' and Teacher's Perceptions

Natalie is very successful in the non-academic tasks proposed in the immersion programme but she experiences difficulties in the instructional part that requires the understanding and use of French. She would rather stay at the craft centre and play with her special friend, Jann, instead of exploring new centres and creating new friendships. The craft centre and Jann appear to be her "safe island" where she feels secure communicating and listening to English only. Jann does not speak French either, therefore, she is in some sense a friend with whom Natalie can identify. Furthermore, Jann lives in the same neighbourhood as Natalie which provides another element of security. Natalie's use of French is very limited, but she does not have the opportunity at home to practise and demonstrate her new language. Natalie's mother does not speak or understand French. She will not do French class related activities with her daughter even though she will be present in the non-academic activities. Whenever Natalie asks a question of her mother as to the meaning of a word in French, Natalie's mother does not have the French background to provide an answer for her daughter. As a result, Natalie will make up her own French language that she will only be using at home when playing with her three year old sister. Furthermore, Natalie's parents' reasons for enrolling their daughter in French immersion are built on external factors. They wish their daughter to learn French because a second language may be beneficial "especially in Canada." They also believe that in our society, a second language is an advantage when it comes to work. Natalie's mother also tends to believe it is easier to learn a second language in the child's first

five to ten years of age. She regrets she did not have the chance to learn French before entering grade 10.

Marc's Experience in French Immersion: Parents' and Teacher's Perceptions

Marc appears to be more at ease than Natalie in the academic and non-academic tasks proposed in his programme. Learning French seems to happen slowly and without any signs of anxiety or frustration. He is often rewarded by his teacher in school for his good answers. Marc will also play at more places with more people. Marc is more willing to take challenges when it comes to the use of French outside and inside school as well as when it comes to making new friends. Marc's experience seems to be marked with more positive factors influencing his motivation to learn and to use French. His mother speaks only English at home, but she does know French since she comes from a French family. Not only does Marc demonstrate his new language at home, but also he has his mother taking part in these rituals. She will sing in French with him, she will read in French with him, and she will also be able to provide him with answers any time Marc has a question that has to do with French, whether it is the meaning of a word or the pronunciation. Therefore, parental support is present when it comes to the academic tasks. Marc's mother will not be present in the school day, but she is part of the kindergarten committee. Through her involvement, she is aware of the programme's philosophy and goals. Her attitude toward the school and the programme is very positive. Finally, Marc's parents' reasons for enrolling their son in French immersion are grounded in internal factors. They feel that Marc must feel special learning a second language. Furthermore, being French, Marc's mother did want her child to learn the language. French is part of her culture, and she would like it to be part of Marc's as well.

The Parents' Feelings Toward Marie and the Programme

Both parents are more than pleased with Marie. They think their children, as well as the other students, love her and respect her. Marc's mother shared more of her feelings toward the philosophy of the programme and related behaviours coming from the

school staff. She emphasizes the philosophy of the school to be basically concerned with the children's social development first and then the academic, hence parental participation, special activities such as fun night, and field trips.

Even though kindergarten is not compulsory in Alberta, Alberta Education provides all school organizations in the Province with an overview of what should be the philosophy and goals underlying all early childhood services programmes (which includes kindergarten), in order to "meet the developmental and special needs of young children and their families" (Alberta Education, iii). Alberta Education also specifies that the philosophy and goals of the programme apply to all Early Childhood Services (ECS) programmes "including those with a specific linguistic, cultural or spiritual emphasis" (Alberta Education, iii). Enhancing emotional development of young children is one dimension of the ECS programme's guidelines:

> It is important for parents, staff and community services:
> - to acquire knowledge and understanding of the emotional needs of young children...
> - to provide an environment in which the child is accepted, respected and feels secure...
> - to use children's emotional needs as a basis for program planning...
> - to develop awareness and respect for the feelings of others (Alberta Education, p.10).

Marc's and Natalie's Future in the Immersion Programme

The school's philosophy seems to meet Alberta Education recommendations. Marie appears to be sensitive to Natalie's and Marc's individual differences and emotional needs. To acknowledge Natalie's success in the non-academic tasks is extremely important so that she develops some sense of industry and a good self-image. However, concerns remain when it comes to her future in the immersion programme. Marie suspects that one day, the linguistic demands will be too high for Natalie. As for Marc, his success, in

both academic and non academic tasks, in addition to the parental support when it comes to the academic tasks and family motives for his participation in the immersion programme are all factors that the literature describes as having positive influences.

Whatever Natalie's or Marc's experiences in immersion, they both need to feel confident in their abilities. Not only are they now able to talk about their strengths and weakness, but at this age, "They want to know that it is permissible to make a mistake, and need opportunities to repair their errors" (Hendrick, 1993, p. 38). This point seems critical when it comes to Natalie's feelings of competence. Somehow, she needs to know that she can make mistakes, and that does not mean that she is not good and incapable of learning French. At the time the data was gathered, Natalie had almost given up trying French in school. Therefore, there is reason to wonder about her sense of competence when it comes to French. Hendrick (1993) underlines the importance of a sense of competency in the child's early schooling experience

> Children who feel competent within their early education are willing to risk learning about new things. They are likely to be independent thinkers who can question ideas. They are less apt to engage in antisocial or disruptive activities. We would do very well in early education if teachers helped children feel competent about meaningful learning. (p. 78)

Conclusion

Are Natalie's and Marc's experiences representative of other kindergarten pupils' experiences? Given the qualitative design of this research and the small sample, it would not be appropriate to suggest that other children experience immersion just the way Natalie or Rory do. However, one can assume that some shared characteristics are present among immersion students. This study raises a major question as to whether or not some immersion pupils might have similar experiences. If so, educators need to be aware of the children's reality and of the importance of recognizing the children's strengths even if they are not related to French ability.

Another question that arises is whether or not the type of parental support a child receives and the internal vs. external reasons for enrolment are possible factors influencing the children's motivation in learning French and using French. Also, is it common for children experiencing difficulty in French related tasks in kindergarten to reduce their circle of friends to one person and also to limit their play behaviours in school to one or very few centres?

From a cognitive point of view, questioning plays a great role in one's capacity to raise and solve problems (Bigge & Shermis, 1992). In turn say Bigge and Shermis, it is these capacities that promote learning and understanding. To see the existing or possible relations between concepts, to give examples, to phrase in one's own words are indicators of good understanding (Bigge & Shermis, 1992). Questioning also plays a role in the children's level of participation in the learning process. In recent years many researchers have promoted the development of active or autonomous learners (Mulcahy, 1991). Similarly, Morgan and Saxton (1991) talk of 'vigorous learner'

> working energetically, acting upon their initiatives, acting upon others, asking questions and understanding that they have the right (and the responsibility) to contribute their ideas, experiences and feelings about the content and procedures of the lesson. (p.7)

Now, given the importance of questioning in the promotion of reflective-level learning, one should ask if in fact, children in immersion classrooms develop questioning strategies that are different from children in regular English programmes. At the same time, one also needs to acknowledge the child's level of language development especially in an immersion kindergarten context where the development of L2 do not reflect the development of L1, and where the questions asked in L1 are answered in L2. If in fact the questioning strategies used by immersion students are different then the ones used by regular programmes' pupils, we need to know what is different about these strategies and how they better help

the immersion pupils in understanding the teacher and the class activities. Would these strategies be helpful to other categories of students? Does the classroom climate allow for effective questioning by students and teachers to promote learning and thinking? According to Lavallée's study, the child's participation in the negotiation of meaning increases with her/his second language development. Once again, it would be interesting to know at which grade level the child's level of language development of L2 allows for the development of an autonomous, active, or vigorous learner.

The analogy drawn between listening strategies of the hard of hearing children and of the immersion students has not yet been documented. The other analogy between sign language and the immersion teacher's gestures in communication proved to be useful in sense making of children. These paralanguage strategies (Lavallée, 1990) are used by the immersion teachers to illustrate and enhance L2 learning the same way they are used by deaf and hearing infants to communicate their needs to their parents. These symbolic gestures play "a significant part in the development of language" (Acredolo & Goodwyn, 1990, p. 8). The systematic study of immersion teachers' gestures and the children's negotiation of meaning is at its beginning stage, and yet, it could reveal so much on the pedagogy of the immersion classroom, and on the true role of gestures in the immersion classroom. These questions would all deserve investigation in future research.

Implications For Educators

1. In order to help the child, the kindergarten teacher could ensure that the child is getting attention for all types of tasks. The attention should not be limited to tasks that are French related.
2. The kindergarten teachers could encourage play in different centres with different people since play and social interaction contribute to extending the child's learning (Endrick, 1993). However, the kindergarten teacher also needs to be respectful of a child who might use a particular centre as a "safe island."
3. In an immersion context, the kindergarten teacher could be particularly aware of individual differences in the children's

emotional development and abilities to respond to the teacher's demands and expectations. The teacher has to remember the importance of developing a sense of competence in the child's early schooling experience. The teacher also has to acknowledge that kindergarten children want to demonstrate what they feel they can do, not what they feel they can't do (Gesell & Ilg, 1987).

4. The kindergarten teacher could ensure sufficient contact with the child's family in order to allow for some form of parental participation and support in the child's schooling experience.
5. The kindergarten teacher could encourage parents to provide opportunities for the children to demonstrate French at home even though the parents might not feel they have the French competence. For example, the parents may suggest to the child to read the words he has learned and to explain their meanings in English to them. The parents might also want to ask their child to teach them the song he just learned in school. By having the parent initiating the child's use of French in the home, we do not wish for them to verify pronunciation or gender; the teacher will take care or that. We rather want to provide opportunities for the child to develop his/her motivation and a sense of confidence in the new language.

Implications For Parents

1. It appears that the child will benefit if the parent can somehow be involved in their child's schooling experience. Here are some ways parental support can be achieved:

a) The parent could visit his/her child's kindergarten when permitted by the teacher. Once in the class, the parent will have a better idea of how an immersion class is run. He will also be able to observe his/her child and acknowledge his/her strengths and weaknesses. He could ask the teacher tips on how to help his/her child develop a sense of competency whether it is non-academic or academic related. The parent can ask the teacher tips on how he/she can help his/her child in developing his/her French abilities and motivation. If he/she finds himself/herself baking bread for the class snack that day, he shouldn't be afraid to get involved and to try

some French with his/her child. Surely would the teacher introduce the term 'pain' for bread. Why doesn't the parent try to repeat it with his/her child a couple times and have some 'pain' for breakfast the next morning!

b) Parents could be involved in the other activities proposed by the school the child is enrolled in. Fun night when parents and children meet together and dance is a good example.

c) Parents could ask their child about his/her daily school activities, what he/she has done and how it was. The five year old might not talk of school on his own (Gesell & Ilg, 1987). Show some interest! Even though the child's schooling is mostly done in French, the parent can easily discuss the event of the day in English.

d) Parents could be in contact with the child's teacher if coming to class is not possible. The kindergarten teacher usually has a good idea of the child's strength, weakness, and emotional state.

2. Parents could tell their child how they feel seeing him/her learn French and how proud they are. However, they should also ensure that the child knows that if he/she is not happy, he/she can tell mom or dad and that it will be okay.

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APPENDIX A
Sample: Children's Questionaire

A- Concern with the here and now

How do kindergarten French immersion children feel in their personal world just as it is right now ?

1- How do you feel when you are in the classroom?

2- How do you feel when you play in the classroom?

B - Activeness

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel questioning the teacher in the language he/she is asked to?

1 - How do you feel when you ask questions?
Do you ask in French or in English?

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel playing in French in the classroom?

1 - How does it make you feel to play new games in French?

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel listening to French in the classroom?

1 - How do you feel when you listen to French, and you understand what is being said?

2 - How do you feel when you listen to French, but you don't understand what is being said?

C - Eagerness

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel responding to the teacher's demands?

1 - When the teacher talks to you in French, how do you feel when you understand what he/she is saying?

2 - Do you think it would be easier to go to school in French or in English?

D - Curiosity

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel exploring a new language?

1 - How does it feel to learn to speak French?

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel learning new concepts in French?

1 - How does it feel to sing in French?

2 - How does it make you feel to talk in French?

APPENDIX B

Sample: Parents' and Teachers' Questionaire

A - Concern with the here and now

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel in their personal world just as it is right now?

1 - How do you think "X" feels going to a French immersion kindergarten?
What makes you think he/she feels that way?

B - Activeness

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel questionning the teacher in French?

1 - How do you think "X" feels when he has to question in French?
What makes you think that way?

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel talking in French in the classroom?

1 - Do you think "X" talks in French in the classroom?
If so, how do you think it makes him/her feel?
If not, why do you believe he/she does not?

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel playing in French in the classroom?

1 - Do you think "X" plays using French in the classroom?
If so, how do you think he/she likes it?
If not, why do you think he/she does not?

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel listening to French in the classroom?

1 - How do you think "X" feels listening to French in the classroom?
What makes you think that way?

2 - Do you think he/she understands most of what is being said in French in the classroom? Why?

C - Eagerness

How do French immersion kindergerten children feel when responding to the teacher's demands?

1 - Do you think your child is able to respond to the teacher's demands?
What makes you think that way?

D - Curiousity

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel exploring a new language?

1 - Do you think it is as rewarding to "X" to go to a French immersion kindergarten as it would be in a regular English kindergarten? Why?

2 - How do you think "X" lives this experience?
What makes you believe that?

How do French immersion kindergarten children feel learning new concepts in French?

1 - How do you think "X" feels learning new concepts in French?
What makes you think that way?

APPENDIX C
Information Sheet

In this study, I will explore, through in-depth interviews, and participant observation, the emotional experience of French immersion (FI) on kindergarten students whose first and only language is English. What are the children's, parents' and teachers' perceptions of the emotional experience of total FI in kindergarten? What is it like to be a five year-old child who not only has to adapt to school but also to a new language? In a time when children are full of questions, curious, active , eager to please adults, and concerned with the here and now, how does it feel to be in a classroom where every new sound and word is incomprehensible and unknown?

The FI approach to second language instruction was first tried in the early 1960's in Canada. Since then, it has gained popularity all around the country. Even though much research has been completed, very little has looked into the emotional aspect of French immersion.

The qualitative research process will be used to investigate the emotional experience of kindergarten children taught in a total FI school, which is a school where French is the medium used to teach all subjects to non-French speaking students during at least 75% of the classtime. There are no regular English programmes in such schools.

In this study, analyses of observation notes and analyses of transcripts of in-depth interviews of a sample of FI kindergarten students as well as their parents and teachers will be the method used.

The parents will be asked to keep a daily journal of school related observational information from October 19th, 1993, to November 16th, 1993.

The children's interviews will take approximately twenty minutes and will be held at school during school hours on November 16th, 1993, and November 18th, 1993.

Arrangements will be made for the parents' interviews to take place during the week beginning November 16th, 1993. The parents' interviews will take approximately forty minutes.

APPENDIX D
Consent Form

Dear Parents,
We would like you and your child to participate in a research project that aims at exploring the emotional experience of French immersion on kindergarten students whose first and only language is English. Some of the questions we will attempt to address are the children's, the parents' and the teachers' perceptions of the emotional experience of total French immersion in kindergarten.

In order to address these questions, the children will be interviewed at school mid-November, 1993. They will be asked to point to one of three sad to happy faces that best represent how they feel about learning French. The children's interviews will take approximately twenty minutes. If you agree to be part of the study, you will be asked to participate in a forty minute interview and to keep a daily journal of observational information regarding your child's school related behaviour for a one month period (mid-October to mid-November). All information will be regarded as confidential. You and your child will be identified only by a number and not by name. The audiotaped parent interviews will be destroyed upon completion of the study. You and your child, of course, would be free to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

The research will be supervised by Dr. Robert Mulcahy, Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. As a graduate student at the University of Alberta, I will be conducting the interviews with the parents and the children. For any additional information please contact me at 484 6649, or Dr. Mulcahy at 492-5211.

Yours truly,

Nadia Rousseau

I give permission for my child _____ to participate in the study described above, and I am also willing to participate.

Signature Of Parents _____ Date _____

APPENDIX E

Extract: Marc's Mother's Journal Transcript

October 19th, 1993

Marc came home from school yesterday afternoon with a 'book' he'd made with the French names of fruits and vegetables. At supper time, he voluntarily 'read' the book to his dad and myself. Then, he went and brought out the 'book' he'd made last month with colors of apples in French and 'read' it to us. He was enthusiastic, but when he forgot how to say a word in French he did not show disappointment. He simply asked me how to say it properly. Up to including now, he continues to show excitement and enthusiasm for learning French and for kindergarten in general...

October 20th, 1993

...Last evening at supper, he said he learned a new French word. He said when the teacher taught the kids the word, she told them not to laugh. He said he didn't laugh when he heard, but he none the less instructed me not to laugh either when I heard it. He then said, "Cabbage in French is 'choux'- get it mom? Shoe? " I did not laugh. He appeared almost disgusted that someone would laugh at a French word...

October 22, 1993

...Yesterday, while getting his skates on at his lesson, he overheard a Francophone father speaking to his son. Suddenly, Marc, who I'm sure was trying to fit in/show off, started singing the first French song they learned in kindergarten, in quite a loud voice "nous allons en autobus, autobus, autobus..." Marc was rewarded with a warm smile from the Francophone parent.

October 28 1993

We saw Marc's teacher at his skating lessons today. Marc is almost in awe of her outside the classroom. He thinks she is super-human (I'm sure of it)...

APPENDIX F

Sample: Natalie's Mother's Interview Transcript

When I go in, and observing her, it seems like she is kind of lost at different time because she does not know what exactly is going on because it is French and madame would be saying different things, instruction or whatever, so she almost look restless or lost or something. She is at a restless stage...she can't sit still for very long...I don't know if it is because of the French and...so she really likes going to school. I think for the moment, when she is getting instruction or something, when she can't quite understand what exactly is going on...I think she does feel a little bit lost...

If I sneak up on her and her sister when they are playing in the bedroom she will be trying to teach her sister different things in French. She makes up a lot of this stuff...if she doesn not know what it is in French, I always use the purple one [example], like one day she came and ask me what the purple was, I no not know [I said] "I think it is purpet" [she said]. She will make up her own French words...

There is a little girl that she is buddied up with. She does not speak French either, so I think they use each other as a crutch so to speak...As far as I am concerned, she first come into that classroom until now, there is a big difference in what she is able to understand. I think, like madame was also saying, one person will understand and the rest would follow kind of thing. And I think, she now has caught on to who to follow and that kind of thing but I really think that she does understand and plus they have the routine, and the routine very seldom changes and even if she does not say 'this word means that you do this' she sees the picture association...

APPENDIX G
Sample: Marie's Interview Transcript

I think that my two students are both with themselves and with the situation. They are both very adaptable to whatever seems to come their way...Marc is very more so than Natalie. Natalie is a little bit more sentitive. They are basically very happy children. Natalie seems to be a little more affected by who she plays with. She has a one little friend that, she is sad if her friend is playing with somebody else, and that, I wrote that in my journal. Marc seems to be happy no matter what situation, where he is, why you are doing this or this it does not seems to matter [laugh]...

...When we have a guest they say 'bonjour' to whoever is there and 'aurevoir' and, we count the numbers on the calender every day, and Natalie is very much less interested in this stuff. Marc is very focused on whatever you're doing. Natalie, you know, she is more worried about who is sitting beside her, who so-and- so is sitting beside ... she is kind of an organizer that way. As for Marc, you could put him anywhere, and he would still listen. But Natalie, I have a little bit harder time to keep her on task.

Natalie, she kind of sometimes look around to see who sits beside her. I think she is a little bit more conscious of what she sounds like or if it's correct. Marc really does not care. And I think too, because he has a little bit of a speech problem, he is used to people maybe not quite understanding what he is saying. So he is not afraid like that at all, whether it is right or wrong, or how it sounds like...But Natalie is a little more concerned, I think, about that...

Natalie, if she does not know what the answer is, she won't even really try. She will say "Well madame, I don't know": [make] a little bit of a joke out of it. But Marc will try, and even if he gets just half of it, he will still try that half whereas she is... she does not have the same, I don't know if it's the confidence level, or whatever it is, but she doesn't have the same attitude that he does...

APPENDIX H

Sample: Meaning Units Belonging to the Category Friends

Source: Teacher Journal

Table 4

Meaning Units Belonging to the Category Friends (Teacher Journal)

Codes	Meaning Units
Class behaviour, friends	These days Natalie wants to go to one centre only, the Lite Brite centre and must always have her "new" friend, Jann, with her.
Friends, feelings,	She was happy doing her Hallowe'en craft today and class activities wasn't too upset by the fact that she and Jann are no longer in the same group.
Feelings, friends	At one point during centre time, Jann was playing with someone else, and Natalie was very upset because she wanted to 'save her as a friend'.
Friends, feelings,	It did not take long, and the poor little girl came to my class heartbroken.
Class behaviours	Jann was playing with someone else, and Natalie did not want to share her.
Play, friends	When we returned, we had [a] snack, and Natalie and Jann were able to spend 10 minutes or so playing at centres.

APPENDIX I
Themes Formation Sources

Table 5
Teacher and Child Interaction

	Sources	
Participants	Journal	Interview
Teacher	X	X
Marc's Mother	X	X
Natalie's Mother	X	X
Marc		X
Natalie		

Table 6
The Importance of Friendship and Play in the Children Lives

	Sources	
Participants	Journal	Interview
Teacher	X	X
Marc's Mother	X	X
Natalie's Mother	X	X
Marc		X
Natalie		

Table 7
The Children's Feelings Toward Their Schooling Experiences

	Sources	
Participants	Journal	Interview
Teacher	X	X
Marc's Mother	X	X
Natalie's Mother	X	X
Marc		X
Natalie		

Table 8
Parental Role and Feelings Toward French Immersion Kindergarten

	Sources	
Participants	Journal	Interview
Teacher	X	X
Marc's Mother	X	X
Natalie's Mother		X
Marc		
Natalie		